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2020

COVID 19 Resource Pack

CAMDEN ICOPE

PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES (IAPT) SERVICE



Camden and Islington
NHS Foundation Trust

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Welcome to the Camden iCope COVID-19 Resource Pack.

This pack is intended to provide you with an update on the services provided by Camden iCope, and contains a wealth of information on managing distress caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We've also included information on local and national services, as well as links to resources. Please be mindful that information was correct at time of writing, but this changes constantly.

Support from Camden iCope

During this difficult time, Camden iCope are making a number of adjustments to the way we work so we can keep our clients and staff safe, whilst continuing to support as many people as possible, including NHS front-line staff and key workers. These changes include:

- We are only offering assessments and treatments over the phone, on-line, by video link and via online platforms such as Silvercloud. We understand that this may not be ideal. However, we recommend that you give this a try and discuss any concerns with the service or your practitioner.
- We do not know when we will be able to offer face-to-face treatments again. If you require face-to-face support we would recommend that you re-refer when this is available again. If you would like to stay on the waiting list for face-to-face treatment, we can send you some resources to work on independently. Please note that we will be reviewing this situation on a regular basis and we may need change this in the future.
- We are still offering evening appointments as usual.
- We are offering shorter treatments so that we can support more people at this time, and we are unable to provide some treatments. However, your therapist will work with you to prioritise goals and support you during treatment and discuss any concerns.
- Waiting times to treatment may be longer during this period. However, we can offer provide resources to support you whilst waiting for treatment.
- Please note that all of our team are currently working remotely from home. However, we continue to ensure that your sessions are confidential and your data is stored securely.

Disclaimer: This resources pack contains information and tips for managing wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. All advice given is optional and for information purposes only. iCope (as part of Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust) do not accept responsibility for use of the information contained in the guides for any other purpose than has been described. If you are concerned about your mental or physical health, then you should seek advice from your GP or a healthcare specialist(s).

General Information about COVID-19

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease that can be caught from being in contact with someone who has the virus. Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment, some people don't show any symptoms at all. However, older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer may have more of a serious illness and require medical treatment.

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, someone may be infectious before they display symptoms of the disease and it is believed that the virus can live on surfaces for up to 72 hours. Therefore, the advice is to wash your hands or use an alcohol-based rub frequently, and to avoid touching your face to avoid catching the virus. The government's current aim is to reduce the transmission and spread of disease between people by asking you to stay at home. By reducing the amount of interactions you have with people you are reducing your chances of catching or spreading it, which is why social distancing and only leaving the house for essential items is crucial to reducing the spread of the disease to vulnerable people.

- If you are suffering symptoms of the virus, including a new cough or high temperature the current advice is to stay at home and isolate for up to 14 days.
- Only contact 111 should your symptoms worsen
- Contact 999-If you feel unable to breath

Currently, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19, however, there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatments.

Key information regarding COVID-19

- <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-symptoms-staying-at-home>
- <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Managing Wellbeing and Distress Related to COVID-19

TOP TIPS:

Our staff have collated our top tips to managing COVID-19 related distress:

- Keep a regular routine in your day where possible
- Keep connected with people: text or call your friends and family, use Skype/Zoom or social media. Try to connect with someone every day. If you are anxious of new technology ask someone to help – we are all learning!
- Limit your exposure to the news or social media relating to Covid-19. Agree on one time in the day when you will catch up with the news, and avoid it for the rest of the day
- Get outside if you can – go for a walk. If you don't get outside you can start to feel that the outside is scarier than it is. If you can't get out open a window. Fresh air and nature are good for wellbeing and stress.
- Stay active doing jobs and chores at home – activity is a great anxiety buster and gives you a sense of purpose and control
- Exercise if you can – it helps with stress and low mood (see below for more ideas and information)
- Eat well and drink lots of water
- Do some fun stuff every day: watch a movie, read a book, binge watch a TV series, bake, garden, do a jigsaw
- Learn something new: chess, yoga, poker, piano, knitting!
- Manage your worry and anxiety (see below)
- Keep positive (see below)
- Manage your health anxiety (see below) – suddenly everyone is very aware of their breathing and their throat – be careful not to diagnose yourself unnecessarily.
- Be kind to yourself and others – everyone is finding this hard
- Sing and listen to music

Resources for managing emotional wellbeing

- <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

General Advice and support

FOOD

If you are unable to find someone to deliver food speak with someone at your local mutual aid group.

<https://covidmutualaid.org/local-groups/>

Accessing food if vulnerable: www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable

MEDICATION

Do you know how you will get your medicines while you are staying in your home? You can order repeat prescriptions online via the NHS app or your GP's online services.

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/gps/gp-online-services/>

Please ask your family, friends or neighbours to pick up your prescriptions from a pharmacy. Just remind them to leave the items outside your door. Volunteers are allowed to pick up your prescriptions on your behalf.

LOCAL SUPPORT

If you are finding it difficult to access the support that you need, there are groups that have been set up all over the country offering local support, such as food shopping and prescription delivery:

<https://covidmutualaid.org/local-groups/>

KEEP MOVING

Keep moving to stay healthy

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos/>

- Do some simple stretches and walk around. See our exercise section for further information.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

SYMPTOMS

If you get coronavirus symptoms such as a high temperature or a new persistent cough, seek clinical advice using <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> as soon as possible. If you symptoms worsen, call 111.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-symptoms-staying-at-home>

Accessing NHS Advice on COVID-19 in Other Languages

In partnership with the British Red Cross, Doctors of the World have translated Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice into 49 languages so far, with guidance based on NHS guidelines.

These guides can be accessed here:

<https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/coronavirus-information/#>

Mental Health Crisis information

Dealing with Suicidal Thoughts:

There are times in life when we might feel hopeless, helpless, and overwhelmed. During these times you may experience suicidal thoughts and thoughts of self-harm. Suicidal thoughts can be common, but can be frightening and confusing.

Feeling like this is a sign to ask for help. These feelings **will** pass. It may feel permanent, but it's transient. Things will change.

Please use the below guidance if you are experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Who to contact in an emergency:

1. First, **contact your GP**

They are your first port of call if you are feeling worse, both physically and mentally, or if you feel you require medication or need to change your medication.

2. If your GP practice is closed, then contact the **Camden and Islington Crisis Team**

This is a telephone helpline if you feel you cannot wait to see your GP

Tel: 020 3317 6333 (This number is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

3. If you feel unable to keep yourself safe, call 999

The Samaritans:

Offers confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide. www.Samaritans.org. Freephone number: 116 123 or Email: jo@samaritans.org

Download <https://calmharm.co.uk/> – An app developed for young people to help manage feelings of self-harm

NCL Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Support Service:

Offers confidential emotional support, for people aged 18+ experiencing suicidal thoughts now or in the past, their family, friends or carers, and anyone affected by suicide, including those bereaved by suicide. They also have translators for people who do not speak English. [NCL Suicide Prevention Website](http://NCL-Suicide-Prevention-Website)

Freephone number: 08088 020 080 (Monday, Wednesday, Friday 6pm-8pm and Sunday from 6pm-9pm) or Email: SuicidePreventionandBereavement@rethink.org

Safety Planning | other ideas that may help you manage feelings of distress

- Talk to a friend or family member
- Go somewhere you'll feel safe (if possible)
- Remove any means of harm
- Engage in self-soothing activities – e.g. take a bath, mindful colouring, walk or exercise, watch your favourite film, listen to your favourite music.
- Create an **emergency box** with meaningful and sensory objects that can ease distress – fill this box with things that stimulate the sense e.g. oils, CDs, pictures, boiled sweets
- Engage in an activity that takes your attention e.g. a puzzle
- **Remember** – the difficult feelings do pass, things do change, people do care, reach out.

Managing Worry

What Is Worry?

As humans, we naturally tend to try and plan ahead, especially when it comes to keeping safe and well. This can be helpful. However, what if we can't plan ahead for all eventualities? COVID-19 has presented all of us with uncertainty about how our future will look. In the face of uncertainty, we will often begin to experience 'worry'.

Worry can be described as a type of **thinking pattern**. It is where our minds dwell on all the potential problems that we may have to face. Worry tends to be characterised by catastrophic thinking, and is typically future focussed, guided by the question of "what if"? *What if we don't have enough food for the family for the next week? What if I lose my job? What if I become unwell?*

People who frequently worry tend to struggle with the idea of "**uncertainty**". They have a low tolerance to uncertain situations which leads to anxiety. Physically, you may experience stomach cramps and butterflies, shakiness, a racing mind, and fatigue as a result of worrying. It changes our behaviour too – we become indecisive, we may over-do things, double check, research, and this can be detrimental, particularly in the face of dealing with a global pandemic. The world suddenly feels more uncertain than ever – we begin to worry about the future – we try to grasp control and certainty in whichever way we can e.g. watching the news frequently, but in turn, all this does is feedback into a cycle of anxiety.

Remember, worry is normal and common human experience, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, excessive worry that interferes with your day to day functioning and sleep indicates that you may wish to approach your worries differently.

Here are some of our tips on how to manage worry in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

How Do I Manage My Worry?

1. Categorise Your Worry – What Type Of Worry Am I Experiencing?

To tackle worrying the first step is to identify what kind of worry am I doing? There tend to be two types:

Current Problem Worries - these tend to be about actual problems that need solutions now. For example, given the very real concern about the virus, there are helpful solutions which include regular handwashing, social distancing, and physical isolation if you have symptoms.

Hypothetical worry - these are worries about things that do not currently exist, but which might happen in the future. For example, about the current health crisis might include imagining worse case scenarios and tend to be “what if...?”

Stopping to categorise your worries may allow you to process them and let them go. However, there are some other strategies you could apply here to help you let go of both hypothetical and current problem worries.

2. Worry Diary

It can be difficult to work out what you are thinking about, especially if you have done this for a long time. Writing down your worries as they pop into your head is a good way to keep a track of what worries you are having and then categorising the type of worry. By breaking down worry this way it can make them feel less overwhelming whilst also help you identify your own patterns or triggers to worry, for example, watching the news. Make sure you note whether your worries are a current problem, or if they are hypothetical (*note - when you review your worry diary later, often you'll see the worry didn't come true*).

3. The Worry Tree

The worry tree is a tool to help identify how best to approach your current problem or hypothetical worries. Take a recent example of one of your worries, and follow the flow chart in the within the worry tree: <https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/worrytree.pdf>. Consider what “letting it go” might look like – can you visualise the worry floating away on a wave? Can you engage your mind in something stimulating e.g. a puzzle? Can you engage in a self sooth activity such as smelling oils or stroking a soft blanket?

4. Manage Hypothetical Worries Using Worry Time

Worry time is an effective technique as it allows us to take control over hypothetical worries, rather than them controlling us. We decide when to worry. It can take time to practice but keep with it and hopefully your worries outside of that worry time will reduce. Worry time involves setting a maximum of thirty minutes in the day in which you allow yourself to worry without any distractions, and the rest of the day you will acknowledge the worries, write them down and then postpone thinking about them. During worry time you can think about the worries that you listed throughout the day and can ask yourself questions to change your perspective: What would you say to a friend if they had this worry? Is worrying about this making it more or less likely to occur? Could there be another more positive or neutral outcome which could occur? Will I worry about this in five years' time? At the end of worry time you throw away the list and do an activity which is engaging and will change the focus of your attention.

5. Manage Real Worries Using Problem Solving

If the worry is real or practical in nature problem solving can be used following the seven steps below:

1. What are you worrying about? Elicit exactly what the concern is.
2. What are the possible solutions? Do not eliminate any options at this point. Consider all options even if they seem out of the ordinary or unrealistic.
3. What are the benefits or advantages and costs or disadvantages of each solution?
4. Based on the information gathered, which is the best solution to use?
5. What needs to be planned to follow through with this solution?
6. Do the solution as planned.
7. Review how it went, ask yourself whether it worked, was it the best solution and would you do it again in the future? If this was not the best solution, is there time to go back and consider doing a different solution?

To understand more about how you might manage your worry in the face of COVID-19, click the link below for a guide to living with worry and anxiety amidst global uncertainty.

[https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide to living with worry and anxiety amidst global uncertainty en-gb.pdf](https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide%20to%20living%20with%20worry%20and%20anxiety%20amidst%20global%20uncertainty%20en-gb.pdf)

Also look at other sections of this resource pack on sleep, mindfulness and relaxation.

Managing low mood / Staying positive

With the current government guidelines, it is understandable that our mood might drop as a result of us not being able to do our usual activities or connect socially with others. It is important to be aware of how we are feeling, talk to others and put strategies in place to help boost our mood.

When we feel low our behaviour changes often resulting in not doing as much as we were before and enjoying things less. Due to this inactivity, we feel worse as we become more tired and lose motivation to do things. It might make us feel better in the short term (because we don't have to exert energy) however avoiding activity means that we don't get the opportunity to have positive experiences and thoughts which might make us feel better. When we feel low it is very common to withdraw from others, procrastinate on completing tasks or avoid doing things. To help break free of this cycle and boost your mood take small/paced steps to increase your activity in the day and set yourself a routine.

When we are feeling lower, it is common to experience more unhelpful or negative thoughts about ourselves or the world around us. Be mindful of what you are experiencing and be compassionate.

Top tips to boost your mood in isolation/lockdown

- Plan your activities
- Make a list of things you would like to do/make sure you continue to do.
- Keep up with self-care and each morning get dressed as if you were going out for the day.
- Pace yourself with these activities, if things feel too hard at the moment, break the task down and complete small/achievable chunks at a time. This will give you more motivation and energy to continue. Please see the [TalkPlus Behavioural Activation](#) booklet for more detailed information.
- Try to keep your usual daily routine as much as possible; waking and going to bed at the same time.
- Do things which are meaningful/pleasurable for you.
- Connect with others; whether this is over the phone, video calls, local support services or those you are living with.
- Set time to relax; mindfulness, yoga, watching your favourite movies/TV shows.
- Be creative; try colouring, crafts, DIY, teach yourself a new skill you can do at home.
- Set yourself achievable goals for the day; use alarms or diaries to support this.
- Complete a form of exercise every day, go out for a walk or see exercise section for ideas.

- If working from home; try to allocate a set space for work to provide separation between work and home.
- Open your curtains and windows, try to get as much fresh air/sunlight as you can
- Start a journal; a space to write down how you are feeling
- Focus on things you are grateful for you; write down one thing you are grateful for every day.
- Plan a wellbeing check into your week; take time out of your day to check in with yourself, how you are feeling and put plans in place for the following week.

Most importantly... **Be kind to yourself**, this is a difficult, uncertain and stressful time for all. It is ok to feel anxious or worried about what is happening: talk to people, write down your concerns or reach out for support from the local services around you.

Resources

Self-help guides:

<https://web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/> Low Mood booklet, and others

<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Depression>
Modules on improving your mood

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/> Mind resources on improving wellbeing

https://www.talkplus.org.uk/downloads_folder/Behavioural_Activation.pdf Improving your mood and activity levels. Other guides are available on the talkplus website under self-help.

Managing Health Anxiety

It's very normal for us to worry about our health. Being physically and mentally unwell can feel very uncomfortable so it is instinctive for us to want to avoid this. However, the problem can arise where the avoidance of illness can become the problem in itself and cause us a lot of distress. We can spend a lot of time mentally thinking about illness or physically trying to avoid illness which can be very time consuming and exhausting. Our mind can often imagine worst case scenarios, such as being seriously ill, dying, or not being able to be close to loved ones when ill, which understandingly is distressing to think about. Therefore, it is understandable that the spread of a new contagious virus highlighted by the media is going to activate worrying thoughts and can cause us to feel very anxious.

We often think we won't be able to cope if we were to get ill or that it would be the worst thing in the world. These unhelpful perceptions of illness make the virus more frightening, it's helpful to reframe these thoughts that validate the difficulties but give a more balanced view. For example, if I was to catch the illness, it may feel uncomfortable at the time of experiencing it but my body is designed to fight viruses and the statistics show that it is likely I will make a full recovery after a few days in bed.

People often say they that it is the uncertainty around the illness that makes them anxious, unfortunately, we need to learn tools to tolerate this uncertainty as we cannot know if we will get ill or how it will feel. Uncertainty can feel uncomfortable, but we manage to live with uncertainty regarding other areas of our life (as nothing is ever certain) so we need to adopt a stance of acceptance and not to fight something we cannot get certainty of.

Top tips for managing Health Anxiety:

- Reduce time reading or watching the media coverage of the illness or time spent online researching symptoms. Only catch up on news headlines for 15 minutes a day.
- Be objective with negative thoughts "I'm going to be seriously ill", "people I love will be unwell" or "I'm going to die" can be very frightening so we need to help notice these are future thoughts and not helpful to buy into. We can choose what we pay attention to so you can steer your mind to thinking about your current task, e.g. paying attention to preparing a meal or talking to a friend.

- Reduce time monitoring your body for the symptoms, if we look for them, we can often find them. Instead of filtering for problems in our body can we notice its strengths or bring in gratitude for your body, what it is capable of. We can change our attention to what we want to focus on in the present using your senses to ground you in right now: what can you see, hear, touch, smell or taste.
- Postpone the worry, allow 15 minutes a day to write out your fears but the rest of your day choose to let it go if it pops in.
- Think - would you rather spend your life assuming you have a terrible illness or getting on with your life?
- Be kind to yourself. There are more stressors than usual at this time, so you deserve more self-care, self-criticism is not going to stop you getting ill! Allow yourself to engage with enjoyable activities and connect with others, your mental health is vital currently.
- Remember it will pass, this anxiety feels uncomfortable, but it won't cause me harm, I have felt anxiety like this before and it always passes.
- By slowing down our breathing we activate our parasympathetic nervous system, this tells our brain to relax and to stop producing stress hormones. By putting our hands on our stomach, we can ensure our belly is relaxed and is moving with the breath, we need to breath out for longer than in, e.g. in for 3 and out for 5 to be able to calm down.
- Take actions for good health for example: eating a balanced diet and doing exercise outside if possible, if not doing online videos.
- Practice relaxation time, doing guided mindfulness exercises or connecting to others can help sooth our anxious responses.

Managing Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Contamination fears: am I washing too much?

It is understandable that we all feel a sense of responsibility in terms of fighting this virus. Unfortunately, our sense of responsibility can become inflated when we are anxious, and we can start to worry that we are going to cause harm to ourselves or others. The instinct at this time can be to increase our time spent washing or cleaning, and it can be hard to gain perspective on what is a reasonable amount to be doing.

The government have advised to wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use alcohol gel regularly when in contact with people outside your household as well as not touching your face. Also to be aware that the virus can live on some surfaces for up to 72 hours so wiping your shopping trolley handles before using them or taking off clothes at your door that might have touched contaminated surfaces, such as your coat from sitting on the tube, can be a good idea.

Once we are in our homes and have washed our hands from being outside, additional washing is unnecessary if we have stopped the virus coming in with us, so adhering to our usual cleaning routine should be enough. For example, washing our hands before preparing a meal, after we have used the bathroom and if we have engaged with dirty substances, e.g. taking the bins out.

As seen in the media, even with the correct protective wear and taking every precaution some doctors and nurses have still caught the disease. On the other hand, people co-habiting with family or partners have not caught the disease from each other when contagious. Knowing this we need to be aware that we can only do so much to prevent possible contamination, as long as we are not intending to spread the disease and we are adhering to the simple precautions above we are doing a good enough job. We need to give ourselves a break as we are faced with an impossible task, fighting an invisible bad guy! So **be kind to yourself** and take some of the responsibility off your shoulders, if you think you're over washing perhaps next time reach for some soothing hand cream.

Sleep

Disruption to your sleep is completely normal during times of uncertainty. Please don't panic if you are struggling to get to sleep or waking up during the early hours for a few nights. Lots has changed in the last few weeks and it's normal for our sleep to get lighter when we feel anxious.

See here for some tips on 'How to get a better night's sleep'

<https://cci.health.wa.gov.au/~media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Sleep/Sleep%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Sleep%20Information%20Sheet%20-%202004%20-%20Sleep%20Hygiene.pdf>

Mindfulness and Relaxation

Living in these anxious times can be draining both mentally and physically. Mindfulness and relaxation techniques can be helpful in calming your emotions and nervous system.

Top tips for Mindfulness and Relaxation:

- Take time to do activity that help you relax: a walk, watching your favourite film or TV programme, listening to music, singing, drawing, playing an instrument, yoga, mindfulness, bath
- Mindfulness: look at a view or a room: notice what you see, the detail, colours, shading, movement, sound, smell. Just notice. If thoughts get in the way, just notice and let them pass.
- Mindfulness: Sit on a chair, notice your feet pushing into the floor and your back leaning on the chair – just notice. Breathe.
- Mindfulness: sit in your garden or by an open window, close your eyes, listen to all the sounds you can hear: traffic, people talking, birds singing, the wind in the trees. Listen to the sounds as if they are musical instruments – listen to the pitch, the tone, the rhythm. Breathe.
- Mindfulness: Hold your breath for 5-10 seconds, then take a deep breath, hold again 5-10 seconds and then relax. Repeat 3 times.

Resources:

- <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/about-mindfulness/>
- <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/relaxation/relaxation-tips/>

Useful apps for mindfulness:

- Headspace App - <https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>
- Calm App - <https://www.calm.com>
- ACT companion: <http://www.actcompanion.com> (free until June 2020 using code: TOGETHER)
- Bangor University Mindfulness- <http://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/>

Self-compassion and being kind to yourself:

We are often compassionate to others, but we can find it hard to be compassionate to ourselves. Self-compassion is the ability to view ourselves with kindness and care. It doesn't always mean being positive. It is recognising our struggle and pain, and offering ourselves kind words and self-soothing, just as we would to a friend or child who is distressed.

Top tips:

- Think about what you would say to a friend who is struggling – say this to yourself
- Remind yourself you are doing your best, it is hard, but you will get through this
- Value yourself: notice your kindness to others, your integrity, your honesty, your concern
- Look after yourself – be kind to yourself, practice self-care
- Positive log: at the end of every day write down three positive things that you have achieved, valued or overcome today
- Notice self-self-critical thinking and replace with compassionate and kind words.
- Notice how hard you push yourself, your perfectionism or your high standards – allow some flexibility in these standards during this difficult time.
- Ask for help – allow others to support and help you.

Resources

<https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk>
<https://self-compassion.org/>

Children and Families:

News of the coronavirus COVID-19 is everywhere, from the front page of all the papers to the playground at school. Many parents are wondering how to bring up the epidemic in a way that will be reassuring and not make kids more worried than they already may be. Below are a few tips about discussing COVID-19 with your children and managing time at home together:

- Don't be afraid to discuss the coronavirus. Not talking about something can actually make kids worry more. Your goal is to help your children feel informed and get fact-based information that is likely more reassuring than whatever they're hearing from their friends or on the news.
- Try to answer your child's questions. Do your best to answer honestly and clearly. It's okay if you can't answer everything; being available to your child is what matters.
- Deal with your own anxiety. If you notice that you are feeling anxious, take some time to calm down before trying to have a conversation or answer your child's questions.
- Be reassuring. Children are very egocentric, so hearing about the coronavirus on the news may be enough to make them seriously worry that they'll catch it.
- Focus on what you're doing to stay safe. Emphasize the safety precautions that you are taking. So remind kids that they are taking care of themselves by washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- The experts all agree that setting and sticking to a regular schedule is key, even when you're all at home all day. Kids should get up, eat and go to bed at their normal times. Consistency and structure are calming during times of stress. Kids, especially younger ones or those who are anxious, benefit from knowing what's going to happen and when.
- It may help to print out a schedule and go over it as a family each morning. Setting a timer will help kids know when activities are about to begin or end. Having regular reminders will help head off meltdowns when it's time to transition from one thing to the next.
- Build in activities that help everyone get some exercise (without contact with other kids or things touched by other kids, like playground equipment). Take a daily family walk or bike ride or do yoga — great ways to let kids burn off energy and make sure everyone is staying active.
- Try: brainstorming ways to go "back to the 80s," before the time of screen prevalence. Think about your favorite activities at summer camp or at home before screens.

- Let kids use social media (within reason) and Skype or FaceTime to stay connected to peers even if they aren't usually allowed to do so. Could they have virtual playdates? Communication can help kids feel less alone and mitigate some of the stress that comes from being away from friends.

Let's put aside our aspirations of perfect parenting, this is not applicable anymore. Maybe your kids don't have TV or screens on the weeknights during the school year, but now that school is cancelled or online, we can give ourselves license to relax these boundaries a bit.

We can explain to our kids that this is a unique situation and re-institute boundaries once more when life returns to normal.

Don't be hard on yourself, you have to find a balance that works for your family.

The goal should be to stay sane and stay safe.

For further information and tips, please visit the Child mind institute:

<https://www.childmind.org>

Camden Council is offering support for Children and Families

The Camden Family Early Help team – this team is offering a 'family check-in' service whilst schools are closed to support families with children up to the age of 19 who may be more vulnerable during this time, making sure they have access to essentials such as food, medicine and supplies, and connecting them to those who can help if needed.

The Camden Health and Wellbeing Team – this team is offering telephone and online advice sessions for families with children up to the age of 11 on a range of topics, such as 'Starting Solids' and healthy lifestyles

More information about these services including how to access them can be found here: <https://www.camden.gov.uk/schools-children-and-families>

The **Brandon Centre** has also produced a useful guide for families, packed with advice and resources to help parents in Camden during the Coronavirus Crisis:

[Advice for parents during COVID-19](#)

Resources if you are Perinatal

It is understandable that raising a young child during the current global crisis may be more difficult and there may be various new challenges to overcome. For people struggling with this, you are not alone and there is support and advice available to support you during this period.

Maternal Mental Health Alliance - (coalition of UK organisations supporting women's perinatal mental health). They have produced a comprehensive resource list for women's physical and mental health, as well as employment rights, during the Covid-19 pandemic

<https://maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/news/mmha-members-offer-reassurance-amid-coronavirus-outbreak/>

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists: very comprehensive advice about what you should/ should not be doing if you're pregnant:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/>

London Perinatal Mental Health Support Group on Zoom - Tues and Thurs 10-11am. A safe space to discuss all things pregnancy, new parenthood and mental health related. Led by an experienced and trained peer supporter from Cocoon Family Support. Join the group on Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/263329262>

You will need to download Zoom first <https://zoom.us/>

Advice about neonatal care: <https://www.bliss.org.uk/parents/support/coronavirus-covid-19-information>

Eve Canavan- blogs about her experience of perinatal mental health difficulties. Has written an easy-to-read guide on all aspects of perinatal mental health.

<https://smalltimemum1.wordpress.com/2018/10/10/new-how-and-where-to-access-help-and-support-for-maternal-mental-health/>

Resources on mental health for partners:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/postnatal-depression-and-perinatal-mental-health/partners/>

Carers

As the situation with coronavirus evolves, it's important to know what support is available to anyone who may have caring responsibilities and those they look after.

- Carers UK has a page on their website, regularly updated with key information: carersuk.org/coronavirus
- As well as answers to some FAQs from carers: carersuk.org/coronavirus-further-support
- There is also a page for carers on looking after their own mental wellbeing: carersuk.org/coronavirus-mental-wellbeing

Camden Carer's are also providing support for carers and will be offering a telephone and email-based service, whilst developing other services in response to the ongoing situation and to carer's needs.

Information about their service can be found here: <https://www.camdenccs.org.uk/>

There are also online support groups for carers, such as Mobilise, which offers an online platform for carers to come together and share their experiences and advice during this challenging time - <https://www.mobiliseonline.co.uk/cuppa>

Recovery College

The Recovery College runs a variety of mental health and well-being courses, free for everyone aged 18+ who lives or works in Camden or Islington. The courses cover topics in four broad areas, including the Recovery Journey, Mental Health Conditions, Wellbeing, and Self-development.

Whilst the college is not currently offering face-to-face courses, they are offering free courses online and a list of their Summer courses, including a calendar of when these will be happening and how to sign up for them can be found here:

www.candi.nhs.uk/recoverycollege

Exercise:

One of the many benefits of exercise is for improved mental health. Exercise has been shown to effectively help minimise stress and depression. If you're currently at home, or working on the front line, small amounts of exercise will be paramount for lifting your mood and reducing stress. Whether or not you are able to stick to your previous exercise routine, it's highly important to stay at least somewhat active during the next few weeks, not only to support your physical health but also your mental wellbeing.

Here are a few useful **websites** and **YouTube** channels for all abilities and ages to help inspire and motivate you to exercise during these difficult times.

Tips: Set small goals, create a routine, and schedule these workouts in.

General Fitness:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos/>

<https://watch.lesmillsdemand.com/at-home-workouts> This temporary site allows free access to 100+ workouts during the COVID-19 disruptions.

There is something for everyone from high intensity interval training designed to improve your strength and general fitness, aerobic dance orientated workouts, the martial arts inspired "Body Combat" as well as "Born To Move" children's workouts which are aimed at youngsters from 4 to 16 years old.

There is also the "Post-Partum" series which helps new mothers get back into exercise safely. This service features the authentic classes and workouts that you would find in a gym with a Les Mills license. Most workouts range between 15 to 25 minutes with some lasting up to an hour and they all require little to no equipment.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ> - Joe Wicks'

YouTube channel is an excellent source of free home-based exercise content. His fitness method uses short "High Intensity Interval Training" workouts, using timed intervals of work and rest. He recently announced that he would begin to produce "P.E with Joe" videos on his channel. These videos are aimed at children to keep fit during the [coronavirus pandemic](#) as schools were closed. He also announced that he will donate 100% of his profits from these videos to the [NHS](#). The workouts are accessible for everyone with easy to follow instructions. Most of which contain simple bodyweight movements that can be done in the living room as a family.

Yoga:

Doing yoga on a regular basis can be extremely beneficial for your flexibility, help you boost your strength and improve your overall fitness and mental wellbeing. **Care Power Yoga** streams live classes from their Youtube channel

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4z1_0UdNR70GZE9eGuDY_VIQBE78ebQ8&

LV Yoga Fareham, in Portsmouth Yoga, is also offering free yoga classes including 'chair yoga' and yoga for kids, which are being live-streamed on its Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/lvyogafareham/>

Exercise for older Adults:

Exercise company [Move It or Lose It](#) caters for older adults, is offering live workout sessions on its [Facebook page](#). The company has also created a [support pack](#) for older people providing guidance on how they can keep exercising at home

<https://www.moveitorloseit.co.uk/>

Dance:

The Royal Academy of Dance have created RAD@Home. Over the coming weeks, they will be adding online dance classes for all ages and abilities

<https://www.royalacademyofdance.org/rad-at-home/>

Vulnerable patients

What do we mean by extremely vulnerable?

People falling into this extremely vulnerable group include:

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People with specific cancers:
 - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
 - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
 - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
 - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
 - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
 - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

If you are in the category above, the NHS will have sent you a letter titled

IMPORTANT ADVICE TO KEEP YOU SAFE FROM CORONAVIRUS.

Being in this category means that should you catch the virus you are at a higher risk of being admitted to hospital for treatment. **The safest course of action is for you to stay at home at all times and avoid all face-to-face contact.** Staying in helps you stay well and that will help the NHS too.

- You can open a window but do not leave your home
- Stay 3 steps away from others indoors
- Wash your hands more often, for at least 20 seconds
- Only essential carers should visit.

Currently the Government have advised vulnerable patients to stay at home for 12 weeks from the 21st March 2020. This may change, please keep up to date with advice on this via <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable-guidance> or **call 0800 028 8327** the government dedicated helpline.

You can also register here as a vulnerable patient if you believe yourself to be so and have not received a letter. www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable

How to Volunteer

This is a worrying time for all of us and it may be causing you stress and anxiety. However you may also be feeling as if you want to help - volunteering can give us all a sense of purpose and structure during difficult times like these.

In response to the Covid-19 situation, Camden council has established a volunteering network called **Time to Spare Camden**.

Time to Spare Camden is building a list of people who can support those in Camden who are most at risk from the coronavirus pandemic, and others who are struggling and might need help, and will be working hard to deploy them where they are most needed.

If you are interested or want to find out more about volunteering in Camden, there is more information about volunteering and how to sign up on the website:

<https://www.camden.gov.uk/volunteering-covid19>

The website also contains guidance on how to stay safe when volunteering as well as links to other local organisations in Camden where you may be able to volunteer.

There are also local volunteering groups on Facebook:

Camden Coronavirus Mutual Aid Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/199172994722225/>

For other volunteering and support groups in Camden you can search here:

<https://covidmutualaid.org/local-groups/> and type 'Camden' into the search box.

You can find out more about volunteering for the NHS here:

<https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHSvolunteerresponders>

CAMDEN SERVICES OFFERING SUPPORT FOR COVID-19

If you are finding it difficult to access the support that you need, there are groups that have been set up all over the country offering local support, such as food shopping and prescription delivery. Services in Camden Borough are detailed below:

	General Support
Camden Council Emergency Hotline	For anyone struggling with housing, benefits and other basic needs, you can contact: 0207 974 4000
Camden Council – Volunteer Groups	<p>Camden council have created this tool to help people find volunteer groups and other services in your local area who can help with things such as groceries, dog walking, staying social etc. https://coronavirus-help.camden.gov.uk/</p> <p>You can also access support by calling Camden Council on 0207 974 4444 and selecting option '9'</p>
Camden Care Choices	<p>Camden Care choices provides information and advice about a wide range of care and support for adults in Camden. This includes staying well, caring for someone, money, benefits, legal matters, living at home and much more.</p> <p>They also provide links and contact details for relevant services to support people in Camden in these areas.</p> <p>https://camdencarechoices.camden.gov.uk/</p>
Local volunteer and support groups	<p>There are a number of local volunteer and support groups on facebook:</p> <p>COVID-19 Hampstead Support Group - https://www.facebook.com/groups/1199651557055619/about/ Camden Coronavirus Mutual Aid Group - https://www.facebook.com/groups/199172994722225/ Volunteer Centre Camden - https://www.facebook.com/VCCamden/ Kentish Town Covid-19 Support Whatsapp Group: https://chat.whatsapp.com/KBPcVwT9KSBvNH3H8zDaT Swiss Cottage Covid Aid - https://www.facebook.com/groups/3079277642124837/</p> <p>Other local volunteer and support groups can be found here: https://covidmutualaid.org/local-groups/</p>

Activities you can do at home	<p>Here you can find a list of 'boredom-busting resources', that might be helpful if you're struggling for things to do at home:</p> <p>https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-online-resources-for-anyone-who-is-isolated-at-home</p>
Podcasts	<p>Several podcasts are offering advice and discussion on coping with COVID-19. One such podcast is 'Psychologists off the clock' which offers discussion on topics such as managing the combination of work, parenting and relationships in quarantine and managing mental health and relaxing during this period:</p> <p>https://www.offtheclockpsych.com/podcast/work-parent-relationships-quarantine</p> <p>https://www.offtheclockpsych.com/podcast/mental-health-covid-19</p>
Mental Health Support	
Samaritans Central London	<p>In light of government advice, Samaritans Central London have taken the difficult decision to stop offering face to face support.</p> <p>However, this doesn't mean they are not here to support. If you're struggling to cope and you feel like there's nowhere to turn, the Samaritans are here to listen round the clock on 116 123 or by email: jo@samaritans.org.</p> <p>They also have provided helpful support on their national website: https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/support-and-information/if-youre-having-difficult-time/if-youre-worried-about-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak/</p>
Mind in Camden	<p>Mind is providing telephone, online and community support for its members. They will also be introducing online peer support groups soon.</p> <p>http://www.mindincamden.org.uk/</p>
Mental Health Camden	<p>The Mental Health Camden site provides information and support for various mental health conditions and has a service directory for mental health organisations in Camden:</p> <p>https://www.mentalhealthcamden.co.uk/</p>
Rethink Mental Health	<p>Rethink has set up this online hub to provide practical support and information that is useful for people living with/or supporting people with mental illness. They will update this page as more information becomes available:</p> <p>https://www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/covid-19-support/</p>

Young Minds	<p>The 'Young Minds' website has tips on how to manage your mental health during COVID-19, with information on specific difficulties, things you can do in isolation and links to support for young people who may be struggling.</p> <p>https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/</p>
	Food
Camden Council	<p>Emergency food packages – Age UK Camden are providing emergency food parcels for vulnerable residents, who can self-refer to this service by completing the referral form on Camden Council website:</p> <p>https://www.camden.gov.uk/emergency-food-packages-covid19/-/coronavirus-</p> <p>You can also call the council on 020 7974 4444 (option 9) for advice on where to access support</p>
Community Support Services	<p>For a range of community supports inc. food parcels, domestic violence, carers: Voluntary Action Camden-VAC has put together a Community Directory:</p> <p>http://vac.secure.nonprofitsoapbox.com/covid-19#</p>
Cooperation Kentish Town	<p>Cooperation Kentish Town is coordinating food distributions to local residents on low or no income. To get in touch, email CooperationKentishTown@gmail.com</p>
Local support groups offering a range of support some including food	<p>Mutual Aid https://www.mutual-aid.uk/ local support groups offering a range of support some including food</p> <p>Mutual Aid Covid https://covidmutualaid.org/local-groups/</p> <p>Search your local area: https://www.google.co.uk/maps/d/viewer?mid=1VqlbggAZXNlLeoJMHZ8X6lJvT28NDgRS&ll=54.38690287825709%2C-2.369432749999987&z=6</p>

Food Banks	<p>Camden foodbank is open and working hard to service the community. If you feel a food bank voucher would help, you can contact your allocated practitioner or the iCope service who will be able to help with this. https://camden.foodbank.org.uk/</p> <p>You can also find other local food banks here: https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/</p> <p>If you can afford food but are unable to get it due to self-isolating or for another reason, please contact your local council or Citizens Advice.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Finances Legal Advice</p>
Benefits	<p>Camden website has information on financial support for residents – see here for more info: https://www.camden.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19</p> <p>For latest advice & guidance on how to sign on/entitlements/housing etc: try Child Poverty Action Group-CPAG who have a dedicated site: https://askcpag.org.uk/</p> <p>Those affected by the coronavirus will be able to apply for UC and can receive up to a month's advance payment without physically attending a jobcentre. Universal Credit info</p> <p>Claim Universal Credit as soon as possible as they are currently very busy and there may be delays – the service is available online. General Universal Credit info</p>
Camden Community Law Centre	<p>Offers free and independent legal advice, assistance and representation in housing, welfare benefits, asylum, immigration, and employment law matters, for people living, working or studying in Camden.</p> <p>See their website for contact details: https://cclc.org.uk/index.php</p>
Capitalise	<p>Capitalise offers free, expert and independent debt advice across London.</p> <p>http://capitalise.org.uk/</p> <p>Free helpline: 0808 164 2480</p>

	info@capitalise.org.uk
National Debt line	<p>National Debt-line is a debt advice charity run by the Money Advice Trust. They are a free and confidential debt advice service.</p> <p>There are guides, fact sheets, budgeting tools and sample letters to help you write to your creditors. You can also get debt advice by using the webchat service, emailing or by calling our helpline.</p> <p>https://www.nationaldebtline.org/EW/Pages/default.aspx</p> <p>0808 808 4000</p> <p>Monday to Friday: 9am - 8pm</p> <p>Saturday: 9.30am - 1pm</p>
No money to pay bills or buy food	<p>If you are in severe financial hardship and need an emergency payment to pay utility bills or buy food you can apply for help through the <u>Local Welfare Assistance Scheme</u> online or by calling us on 020 7974 4444 (option 9).</p> <p>1. Money Advice Service</p> <p>0800 138 1677</p> <p>moneyadvice.service.org.uk</p> <p>2. Mary Ward Legal Centre</p> <p>020 7831 7079</p> <p>marywardlegal.org.uk</p> <p>3. Citizens Advice Camden – free confidential and independent advice and guidance on a wide range of issues</p> <p>Advice line: 0300 330 1157</p> <p>camdencabservice.org.uk</p>
Utilities	<p><i>I'm unable to top up my pay-as-you go energy or struggling with energy bills</i></p> <p>The government has agreed measures with energy providers to support vulnerable people through COVID-19. Those with pre-</p>

	<p>payment meters who may not be able to add credit should speak to their energy provider about options to keep them supplied.</p> <p>The agreement has been signed by all UK domestic suppliers and will come into force immediately.</p> <p>If you are unable to top up your pre-payment meter contact your supplier immediately. Ofgem recommends consumers leave the meter box unlocked if they need someone else to top up the meter.</p> <p>Smart meter customers should be able to top-up remotely, such as by phone, mobile application or online.</p> <p>More information is available here.</p> <p>Emergency welfare</p> <p>Camden Council welfare fund for residents can make a payment, which is normally under £100 - but can be used to pay a utility bill or food shop</p> <p>Link: https://www.camden.gov.uk/web/forms/shared/-/form/159607300</p>
GOV.UK. Employment and financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check if you can get statutory sick pay (SSP) • Check if you're eligible for Universal Credit • Check if you're eligible for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) • Employers can apply for staff to get up to 80% pay if they can't work • Get an isolation note to give to your employer • Your rights if your hours are cut or you're laid off • What to do if you cannot pay your tax bill on time
	Employment Rights
Trades Unions	<p>Remember to check your trade union as they are updating their resources all the time. If you're not sure who your trade union is try GMB:</p> <p>https://www.gmb.org.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-your-rights</p> <p>List of unions by sector:</p> <p>https://www.tuc.org.uk/unions?search_api_views_fulltext=&page=4</p> <p>https://www.tuc.org.uk/resource/covid-19-coronavirus-guidance-unions-updated-30-march</p>

Neutral employment information	https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus
Maternity Advice	https://maternityaction.org.uk/2020/03/covidmaternityblog/
Carrying over Annual leave	https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rules-on-carrying-over-annual-leave-to-be-relaxed-to-support-key-industries-during-covid-19
Managing your OCD at work	https://www.ocdaction.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf-precompiled/leaflet - your rights ocd and work 0414.pdf
Practical advice for job loss or financial strain	https://www.turn2us.org.uk/get-support/benefits-and-coronavirus-help-for-employees Fuel poverty support: http://www.endfuelpoverty.org.uk/tag/coronavirus/
Your rights at work	https://www.unison.org.uk/coronavirus-rights-work/
Employment Law advice	https://unionline.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/
	Housing
Housing	<p>If you are a council tenant, talk to your neighbourhood housing team who will try to help you through this difficult time. However, no council tenant will be evicted for not paying their rent due to COVID-19.</p> <p>If you are a private renter, we are urging all landlords not to evict a tenant who can't pay the rent as a result of COVID-19. However, if you are struggling to pay your rent you can apply for Universal Credit. If you are already receiving Universal Credit or Housing Benefit you can apply to the Council for a Discretionary Housing Payment.</p> <p>If you're a home owner, please call your mortgage provider to explain your change in circumstances because they will be able to pause mortgage payments for up to three months.</p>
	Education and Schools

Children eligible for free school meals	<p>Information: Schools are preparing to offer meals for free school meals eligible children next week, and a team is mobilising to try and start delivering food to family's doors.</p> <p>0207 974 4837 or email full.circle@camden.gov.uk</p>
GOV.UK Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What parents and carers need to know about closures • Guidance for schools and local authorities on closures • School opening for children of key workers • Cancelled exams • Dealing with COVID-19 in nurseries, schools and universities • Supporting vulnerable children
SENDIASS Camden	<p>SENDIASS offer resources and information about the law on special educational needs and disability which includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education, health and social care • national and local policy • the Local Offer • your opportunities to participate • where you can find help and advice • how you can access support <p>http://www.sendiasscamden.co.uk/</p>
Coronavirus Resources for SEND	<p>Camden Council have collated information related to coronavirus with a focus on those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to help families, children, young people, and those working with them.</p> <p>http://cindex.camden.gov.uk/kb5/camden/cd/advice.page?id=sD99RISy034&localofferchannel=0</p>
Other support available	
Domestic abuse support	<p>Camden Safety Net: This service provides access to support and advice for people experiencing domestic abuse or who feel at risk. For support call 020 7974 2526 or send an email to Camdensafetynet@camden.gov.uk</p> <p>Camden Solace Women's Aid: offers advice and support to women and children escaping abuse and violence. Solace Women's Aid can be contacted on 0808 802 5565 https://www.camden.gov.uk/domestic-abuse-and-violence-support</p> <p>The Refuge: offers a range of ways to access support for women and children who are experiencing violence and abuse, and has safety tips for survivors https://www.refuge.org.uk/get-help-now/</p>

	<p>https://www.refuge.org.uk/covid19-survivor-tips/</p> <p>If you need support outside of these hours call the Freephone 24-Hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247</p>
Camden Advocacy Service	<p>The Camden Advocacy Service offers advocacy support to a range of people including older adults, people with mental difficulties, learning difficulties, conditions such as dementia and several other groups, helping individuals express their views and wishes.</p> <p>For further information they can be contacted on 020 3317 7197 or by email at camden.advocacy@rethink.org</p>