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COVID 19 Resource Pack

ISLINGTON ICOPE
PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES (IAPT) SERVICE



Camden and Islington
NHS Foundation Trust

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Disclaimer: This resource 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).

Welcome to the Islington iCope COVID-19 Resource Pack.

This pack is intended to provide you with an update on the services provided by Islington 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 Islington iCope

During this difficult time, Islington 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 or by video link. 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 will 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 offering additional support for those working on the front-line in hospitals, key workers and those experiencing COVID-19 related distress.
- We will not be able to offer evening appointments for routine appointments. Evening appointments will be reserved for supporting front-line staff only.
- We are offering shorter treatments so that we can support more people at this time. Your therapist will work with you to prioritise goals for treatment and we will offer further resources to support your therapy. We are offering approximately 8 sessions for CBT or 4 sessions with one of our PWPs.
- Waiting times to treatment may be longer as we prioritise front line staff. However we will offer additional resources to support you whilst waiting for treatment.
- Please note that most 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.

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 your symptoms worsen, call 111.

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

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 **Camden and Islington Crisis Line**

Tel: 02033176333

This is a telephone helpline when you are unable to contact your GP out of hours.

Tel: 0800 028 8000 (Mon-Fri, 5pm-9am; Sat, Sun & Bank Holiday, 24 hours)

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

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 feed back 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 it....?"

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

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/>
- www.bemindful.co.uk

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-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>

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
- Islington Carers Hub also provides support for carers
<https://islingtoncarershub.org>

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, its 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.

<https://www.arthritisaction.org.uk/living-with-arthritis/resource-centre/exercises/>

Many people living with a long-term health condition find it difficult to attend exercise classes. To help them, Arthritis Action recently launched a series of online chair based exercises developed with the aim of helping those with hip, knee or spinal Osteoarthritis more mobile and active.

<https://www.arthritisaction.org.uk/exdirectory/free-virtual-exercise-classes/>

Arthritis Action has brought together a directory of activity providers that are now offering free video exercise classes online, to help you find ways to remain active, particularly if you are shielding, or remaining indoors during self-isolation

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

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.

You can find volunteering opportunities through the Voluntary Action Islington website:

<https://vai.org.uk/volunteering/find-volunteering-opportunities/>

For other volunteering and support groups in Islington you can search here

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

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

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

ISLINGTON SERVICES OFFERING SUPPORT FOR COVID-19

Below are some services/groups offering practical support with finances, getting food and prescriptions during the crisis, mental health/wellbeing, domestic violence and information resources.

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Mutual aid

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

Provide resources and connect people to nearest local groups, willing volunteers and those in need.

Islington Covid-19 Mutual Aid

The People's Army Coronavirus Support Islington

Number: 07309 071 759

Email: Thepeoplesarmy@gmail.com

London LGBTIQ+ Covid-19 Mutual Aid Queer homeless charity The Outside Project is concerned about LGBTIQ+ people in London who are homeless, sofa surfing, squatting, living in overcrowded accommodation or living in isolation as services begin to close down.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/646616226125829/>

Islington St Mary's Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group

Number: 07599656737

Email: stmarysmutualaid@gmail.com

We Are Islington Helpline

Islington Council, voluntary sector and mutual aid groups are working together to provide support. This includes help with getting food or medicine, online group activities, legal advice or a friendly phone conversation. Call the helpline on 02075278222 or email weareislington@islington.gov.uk. Phone line is open everyday from 9am – 5pm.

Islington Directory

<https://directory.islington.gov.uk/kb5/islington/directory/results.page?communitychannelnew=13>

Directory of local practical support being provided during the pandemic.

Streets Kitchen

A grassroots homeless group that offers cooked meals to people across in different areas around the capital every evening.

<https://www.streetskitchen.org>

Resident Support Scheme

Provides shopping vouchers for families who are struggling financially.

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/advice/resident-support-scheme>

Age UK Islington

Providing guidance and practical support, connections to emergency help and wellbeing calls. Can call helpline on 02072816018 or email gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk Mon- Fri, 9am-5pm.

Debtline

Free online and telephone help and advice on dealing with your debt.

Specific advice around coronavirus and debt:

<https://www.nationaldebtline.org/EW/factsheets/Pages/coronavirus-advice-and-support/help-and-advice.aspx>

Call for free debt advice on: 0808 808 4000

Webchat with an adviser through website: <https://www.nationaldebtline.org/>

Monday to Friday: 9am - 8pm

Saturday: 9.30am - 1pm

Islington People's Rights (IPR)

IPR offers free welfare benefits and debt advice to residents in Islington. They have an advice line open on Monday, Tuesday and Friday between 2-4PM. Call on 020 7561 3685. You can also speak to your therapist about getting a referral for an IPR appointment.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Mind in Islington

<https://www.islingtonmind.org.uk>

Provide a range of services to people that experience mental health issues in Islington. Contact by phoning 02033019850 or emailing jane.moody@islingtonmind.org.uk

NCL Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Service

Support for those who are currently experiencing suicidal feelings, or who have experienced suicidal feelings in the past, their family, friends or carers as well as those who have been bereaved by suicide. Offer confidential emotional support, promote coping strategies and offer a safe space to discuss matters related to suicide.

Telephone Helpline: 080088020080

Text Message Support: 07860058793

Webchat Support: www.rethink.org/ncl-suicide

Opening hours Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 6-8PM and Sunday from 6PM-9PM.

Be on Hand

An Age UK service for older adults who need befriending during isolation. Offering practical support and telephone befriending. All volunteers are DBS checked. Please speak to your therapist about being referred for this service or refer yourself via their website:

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

Body & Soul Crisis Counselling for NHS Frontline Staff

Body & Soul has launched a crisis support line with a team of volunteer qualified therapists to help anyone working on the frontline. They are offering a 30-minute one-off session with a trained therapist with an option for further support if necessary. Request a call via website

<http://bodyandsoulcharity.org/sharethelove/#text-blocks-nhs>

Anxiety UK Helpline

Anxiety UK has a free helpline to help deal with anxiety during this difficult time. Call on 03444 775774. Open Mon-Fri 9:30AM – 10PM and on weekends between 10AM – 8PM. See website for more info and resources about dealing with anxiety during the pandemic:

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/coronanxiety-support-resources/>

Papyrus Hopeline UK

Helpline offering confidential support and advice to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide and anyone worried about a young person. <https://papyrus-uk.org/hopelineuk-is-here-for-you/>

Phoneline: 08000684141

Email: Pat@papyrus-uk.org

Text: 07860039967

Opening hours: 9am – 10pm weekdays, 2pm – 10pm weekends, 2pm – 10pm bank holidays

Muslim Women's Helpline

Call: 0800 999 5786

Monday to Friday, 10am – 4pm

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

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Solace Women's Aid

Support for women experiencing domestic violence. Call 08088025565 or email advice@solacewomensaid.org. Mon-Fri, 10am – 4pm. Additional 6pm-8pm on Tuesdays.

If you need support outside of these hours call the Freephone 24-Hour [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](https://www.nationaldomesticabusehelpline.org/) on 0808 2000 247

Government Advice

Government guidance for those who are experiencing or who feel at risk of domestic abuse during COVID-19 outbreak. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-and-domestic-abuse>

Respect Phoneline

A confidential helpline, email and webchat service for perpetrators of domestic violence looking for help to stop. Help for male and female perpetrators, in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. Partners or ex-partners of perpetrators, as well as concerned friends and family and Frontline Workers are welcome to get in touch for information, advice and support.

For more information: <https://respectphoneline.org.uk>

Phoneline: [0808 8024040](tel:08088024040)

Galop

Domestic abuse helpline for LGBT+ people
Call: 020 7704 2040 for the London LGBT+ Advice Line.
Monday to Friday, 10:00am - 12:30pm and 1:30pm - 4:00pm

Call: 0800 999 5428 for the National LGBT+ Advice Line.
Monday to Friday, 10:00am - 5:00pm
Wednesday to Thursday, 10:00am - 8:00pm

USEFUL INFORMATION RESOURCES

Rethink Mental Health

Rethink has set up an online hub to provide information and practical support for people living with mental illness during COVID-19. <https://www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/covid-19-support/>

Young Minds

Website with 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. <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/>

Recovery College

Recovery College are offering a free online course in Coping During the Pandemic. There is information about how to avoid catching/spreading the virus, what immediate feelings you may have and common reactions, managing your mental health at this time, managing isolation and social distancing, self-care and supporting children and young people. Contact via <https://www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk/information/help/contact/>

Body & Soul MindSET Livestream

Body & Soul is providing a weekly MindSET Livestream session that will be accessible to any young person in psychological distress. You can register for each session and receive a link that will provide access to the event. MindSET delivers effective, concrete skills to help young people manage emotional distress, skills that have been essential to our members at risk of suicide and self-harm. Register via website <http://bodyandsoulcharity.org/sharethelove/>

MindEd COVID-19 Resilience Hub for Frontline Workers

The MindEd COVID-19 Resilience Hub is a website designed to provide rapid accessible tips to frontline workers on looking after their mental health during this difficult time. This will be continuously improved, adding new topics and audiences to the hub. <https://covid.minded.org.uk>