

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF DURING CORONAVIRUS

This is a challenging time and it's important to look after yourself. Try to and get enough sleep, eat regular meals and do an activity each day that you enjoy.

This is particularly true if you have caring responsibilities. It's hard to look after somebody else if you're feeling run down yourself.

Key factors to consider

Dr Bessel van der Kolk, as psychologist specialising in trauma, has identified key factors to help look after ourselves during this time.

-  **Predictability** – creating a predictable schedule with activities. For example, it might be easier to cope if you know that your friend or family member is going to call at the same time each week, or if you only watch the news at a specific time.

-  **Mobility** – moving your body. Physical activities that also focus on relaxation can be helpful at the moment, such as yoga, tai chi, mindfulness or meditation.

-  **Connection** – connecting with other people. For example, regular calls with loved ones, or calling a helpline to talk to somebody who understands your situation.

-  **Being mindful** – practice being 'in the moment' by tuning into what is happening in our bodies and what's happening around us. Notice what comforts us or gives us pleasant sensations.

-  **Having a sense of time** – routine will help with this and trying to live with more awareness. Some people find it helpful to have rituals to mark particular times of the day (like bedtime) or days of the week (like making a special meal on Sundays). Getting up and going to sleep at the same time can really help too.

-  **Safety** – understanding what makes you feel safe. This may be music or certain people or places. Taking care over how you move can also help you feel safe in your body, for example noticing the movements involved in making a cup of tea or walking between rooms. Having your own space where you feel safe can also be important. This could be a favourite place to sit in your home, where you are surrounded by comforting objects.

Share your ideas and feedback!

We plan to keep updating this document and we'd love to include your ideas too! If you have feedback or suggestions please contact us:

Tel: 020 8702 6300

Email: beh-tr.victoriareceptioninbox@nhs.net

A simple mindfulness exercise – The Short Pause

Try this simple mindfulness exercise (devised by NHS Fife Going Beyond Gold). Take regular short 2-3 minute pauses as often as you can during the day with 4 key steps:

- 1. Breathe.** Take a few deeper breaths than normal – a long slow in breath and a long slow out breath - pay attention to your in-breath, all the way in – and your out-breath, all the way out. Feel a sense of letting go on the out-breath.
- 2. Ground yourself.** Feel your feet on the ground – notice any sensations like tingling or heat or cold. Paying attention to your feet takes your attention away from thoughts and difficult emotions.
- 3. Smile.** You may not feel like smiling, but doing it will automatically relax tension in your body – and it may light up someone else’s day if they see you.
- 4. Notice.** Take notice of one thing you can be grateful for, right now in this moment, e.g. help from others, comfy bed, taste of tea or coffee, message from a friend, daffodils, etc.

Additional resources

General support

The Samaritans – emotional support for anybody who needs to talk.

 Helpline: **116 123**. Open 24/7. Free. www.samaritans.org

The Silver Line – information, friendship and advice for people aged 55+.

 0800 470 80 90. Open 24/7. Free. www.thesilverline.org.uk

Age UK – advice and somebody to talk to for older people (and their families).

 0800 678 1602. Daily, 8am-7pm. Free. www.ageuk.org.uk

Mental health

Barnet Enfield & Haringey Mental Health Trust crisis line – if you’re experiencing a mental health crisis

 Call 0300 0200 500. Open 24/7.

SANE – emotional support & information for anybody affected by mental health issues.

 Call 07984 967 708 and leave a message with your first name and a contact number, and somebody will call you back as soon as possible. www.sane.org.uk

Your GP – talk to your GP if you’re struggling with your mental health. They can signpost you to additional support.

Dementia and Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's Society – support, information and advice about dementia and Alzheimer's.

- ✚ Helpline: **0333 150 3456** Mon-Weds, 9am-8pm, Thurs-Fri, 9am-5pm, Sat-Sun, 10am-4pm. Standard call charges apply. <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk>

Dementia UK – for anyone with a question or concern about dementia or Alzheimer's.

- ✚ Admiral Nurse helpline: **0800 888 6678**. Mon-Fri 9am-9pm, Sat-Sun 9am-5pm. Free. www.dementiauk.org

Support for carers

Carers UK – information & guidance for unpaid carers.

- ✚ Helpline: **0808 808 7777**. Mon & Tue, 10.00-16.00. Free. www.carersuk.org

Carers Direct – information & advice for unpaid carers (NHS Choices service).

- ✚ Helpline: **0300 123 1053**. Mon-Fri, 9am-8pm; Sat-Sun, 11am-4pm. Standard call charges apply. www.carersuk.org

Telephone friendship (get a regular call from a friendly volunteer)

Reach & Connect – offering regular telephone friendship calls for anybody in Haringey.

- ✚ Request here: <https://reachandconnect.net/get-support/telephone-friendship>

Call in Time (Age UK) – regular telephone friendship calls for people aged 60+.

- ✚ Sign up here: www.ageuk.org.uk/services/befriending-services/sign-up-for-telephone-befriending

Mindfulness & anxiety

The Free Mindfulness Project – free mindfulness and meditation exercises.

- ✚ Website: www.freemindfulness.org

NHS Every Mind Matters – tips to deal with stress and anxiety, improve sleep, boost mood and feel more in control.

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