

## Coping during the COVID-19 lockdown

During these uncertain times it can be very difficult to stay positive and maintain our good mental health and this can lead us to feeling down, tired and lacking any enthusiasm.

We would like to share with you some things that you may find useful during this time – to help you find some positives in each day, give you some structure and routine and even start to feel good about yourself in this rather unusual situation we find ourselves in.

- **Be kind to yourself** – this is the first time any of us have been in this situation and we are all learning how to cope with our new routine, or lack of it. It is ok not to feel ok and recognising that is a great start.
- **Find your own space** – as much as we may love our family/friends, or whoever we are in lock down with, we all need our own space – this may be in the bedroom, in the garden or by going for a walk alone (maintaining social distancing rules of course). We can clear our minds and think about, or do, whatever we want. This is healthy and it is good for us to learn to be alone and to enjoy our own company.
- **Create a routine** – whether this is daily, weekly or anything in between. A good routine can help us all feel a little better and stop the days from merging in to one. Get up and get dressed every day – give yourself a time when this needs to be done by and have a good breakfast to start the day off well. Do all things we would normally do if we were getting up and ready for school, college or work.
- **Keep talking** – maintain contact with your friends, family and colleagues. We all need to hear from someone every now and then, and it can really brighten someone's day to hear from you. It also gives you a chance to talk to about how you are feeling, which is sometimes all we need to do, to help make ourselves feel better.
- **Exercise** – this may not be something everyone leaps out of bed for, or thinks is suited to them, however, physical exercise is proven to boost mood and release endorphins that help our mental health. Whether it is doing 'keepy-uppies' in the garden, learning a TikTok dance routine or finding a HIIT workout on YouTube, there is something out there for everyone. Doing exercise will almost certainly get your heart rate pumping and leave you feeling more positive and less stressed.
- **Just do nothing** – find some time to let go of all your worries, problems or stresses and do absolutely nothing, guilt free. Simple but effective – and best of all, completely free.

- **Learn something new** – what better time to learn a new skill or do some online learning than now? There are hundreds of websites, tutorials and resources out there, free of charge, where you can take up a new hobby or gain a qualification. Whether it's learning a language, playing an instrument or taking up coding – whatever interests you – there will be a way to access this. The internet has a huge array of resources, or you may already have a book about the subject? A relative living in your own house could teach you something new? Nothing is impossible and this is not only a great new way of passing the time, but gives us a great sense of pride and achievement.
- **Do what you always did** – this may sound more difficult than it is. If you loved going out for lunch or dinner with your friends, why not set up a group video call and all eat together? This is a fun way of feeling like you are still seeing your friends and doing the same things you always did. If you were involved in a hobby that meant attending a group (such as sports or community activities), can you set up a group chat facility to update each other on how you have been doing? Could you share content on your social media accounts to communicate with others? There are live quizzes, choirs, dance groups and much, much more to allow you to continue with as much of your life as possible, just in a slightly different way.
- **Find the good things** – this may sound cheesy but is so easy and does actually work. It can be very easy to think about all the things we can't do during this time and this can have a huge impact on our mental health and ourselves overall. Thinking about the positives we are getting from this, can help boost our mood and appreciate some of the smaller things. It may be that you get to spend more time with someone you rarely saw, have enough time to do things you were too busy for in the past, or simply enjoy some lighter nights and a bit more sun on our faces. Finding something good about each day can make us all more thankful.
- **Plan for your future** – there's nothing like having the time to think, to allow us to really appreciate what we have and what we might want to change going forward. If you have been considering your future, now is the perfect time to research this further. **[www.ckcareersonline.co.uk](http://www.ckcareersonline.co.uk)** is a great place to start. It will direct you to online career tools such as Jed and the Buzz Quiz so you can think about what you might want to do as a job or career, as well as listing all the options after Year 11 and beyond. You can also 'Chat' live to our qualified advisers to get some answers to those burning questions you have about your future. If you want to get your CV looking sharp, ready for applying jobs – we have templates for that! If you want to brush up on your interview techniques, we have tips for that. We can help with anything you might want to know about planning your future and how to get there!