

## 8 ways to look after your mental health



The following are some useful tips that can enhance your mental well-being in times of crisis



### Coping with Covid Anxiety

As news about coronavirus (COVID-19) dominates the headlines and public concern is on the rise, we would like to remind you that looking after your mental health is as important as looking after your physical health. Good mental health and positive wellbeing can help you better cope with the COVID-19 threat and the uncertainty it's creating.

#### 1) Seek accurate information

Seek accurate information from legitimate sources & limit yourself to reading information only from official sources like the World Health Organisation (WHO), HSE, Gov.ie and other credible sources such as national TV, radio and News sites. These credible sources of information are key to avoiding the fear and panic that misinformation may cause.

#### 2) Set limits around news

Try to avoid excessive exposure to media coverage. Constant monitoring of news updates and social media feeds about COVID-19 can intensify feelings of worry and distress. Set limits on your news time, consider turning off automatic notifications. This will allow you to focus on your own life and important needs, your immediate surroundings and what you can control.

#### 3) Self-Care

Self-care in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak includes focusing on things you can control (like having good hygiene) instead of those you cannot (stopping the virus). Where possible, maintain your daily routine and normal activities: eating healthy meals, getting enough sleep and doing things that you enjoy. Consider creating a daily routine that prioritises your wellbeing and positive mental health. Activities like taking a walk, meditating or exercising, can help you to relax and will have a positive impact on your thoughts and feelings.

#### 4) Reach out

Keeping in touch with your friends and family may ease the stress caused by COVID-19. Talking through your concerns and feelings may help you find ways of dealing with challenges. Receiving support and care from others can bring a sense of comfort and stability. Assisting other people in their time of need and reaching out to someone who may be feeling alone or concerned can benefit both the person receiving support as well as the helper. If you are cocooning or under quarantine the idea of self-isolation may seem daunting, keep in mind that this is only temporary and that there are still many ways to regularly connect with others digitally. Such as Email, Skype, Facetime, Whatsapp and Zoom.

#### 5) Hope

Try and focus on things that are positive in your life. The WHO recommends to find opportunities to amplify the voices, positive stories and positive images of local people who have experienced the novel coronavirus and have recovered or who have supported a loved one through recovery and are willing to share their experience.

#### 6) Acknowledge your feelings

It is normal to feel overwhelmed, stressed, anxious or upset, among a wide range of other emotional reactions, in the current situation. Allow yourself time to notice and express what you're feeling. This could be by writing them down in a journal, talking to others, doing something creative, or practising meditation.

#### 7) Talk to your kids

It is equally important to help children cope with stress and protect them from any coronavirus hysteria. Answer their questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that children can understand. Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra care, attention and support.

Reassure your children that they are safe. Let them know it is OK if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope with you.

#### 8 Ask for professional support

If you are finding it difficult to cope, consider asking for professional support:

Contact your local **PSS team** in confidence.

Your confidential helpline operated by Inspire wellbeing is available on: **1800 409 673**

The YourMentalHealth information line can link you with the relevant support services. Call: **1800 111 888**

You can also speak in confidence with the **Samaritans on 116-123**

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