**Coronavirus coping tips**

**Adapted from an Article in SHP March 2020**

**How can you manage your head and overcome your feelings when they are overwhelming and how can you help others who may be struggling too? Here are a few tips that might help over the coming weeks.**

1. **Scale how you feel from 1-10** – with ‘1’ being the worst you have ever felt, and ‘10’ being the best you’ve ever felt.   
   What number are you right now?   
   It is a subjective measure, but it is a useful one. Whatever number you are, how can you increase it by 1?   
   What do you need to do, and who can help you?   
   It is ok to be uncertain and feel sad for a short time, but then you need to ‘act’ to improve your mood. [Have a look at our MindKind self-care tips to help you.](https://www.intra.staffordshire.gov.uk/healthsafetywellbeing/MindKind/Looking-after-yourself/Looking-after-yourself.aspx)
2. **Accept the advice** we are being given – acceptance can be hard, and we are frightened. Rebelling against it will prolong the time need to practice social distancing and isolation. Being separated is not our natural response and so the more accountable we can be, and the more responsible we are by making good choices, the better.
3. **Manage your self-talk** – how are you talking to yourself in your head?   
   Would you talk to anyone else like that? If you wouldn’t, then be kinder to yourself, even if you change how you are speaking to yourself just once a day (you don’t have to believe it!) it will make a difference to how you feel.   
   [Change the negative words to positive](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hope-relationships/201605/the-power-positive-self-talk), be nurturing, be kind to you.
4. **Recognise what you can control and influence** – you have control over you.  
   You can influence the people around you in your physical household and any who depend on you. The rest falls in to the ‘circle of concern’ which you can’t control.   
   It is important to recognise what you can do, and what you can choose to let go of.
5. **Ask for help** – are you good at asking for help or do you avoid it?   
   Think about who can help you, and who you can help.   
   We are in this together, and if we don’t help one another, then the tougher this will be. Help others for the right reasons, and that good stuff comes back to you (at some point!).   
   There are many local groups (rotary, church groups, citizens groups) who may be able to help you as well as you helping others.
6. **Take time out –** Manage social media and news access.

Our brains are not meant to function 24 hours a day.   
Decide on your trusted news provider and check in with that source periodically. Not all media – including social media is reliable – so choose your sources carefully.

1. **Manage your time –** balance things in your life.   
   At home with a family? Plan together, take breaks together even if home schooling? If you are on your own, plan in calls with family and friends to break up your day. Be mindful of your energy levels and work/be active when they are high, so you are effective (don’t be too hard on yourself if energy levels dip!).
2. **Access support** – talking to friends, family and colleagues if your wellbeing is poor, can help. Look at [“Take 10 together”](https://www.intra.staffordshire.gov.uk/healthsafetywellbeing/MindKind/Talking-about-mental-health.aspx) to help others and you. If you need to talk to a professional seek support through [ThinkWell](https://www.intra.staffordshire.gov.uk/healthsafetywellbeing/ThinkWell/ThinkWell.aspx) , your GP or try or online resources or Apps.
3. **Stay in touch** – keep contact with each other (phone, skype, zoom, WhatsApp etc.)  
   Writing letters, have virtual coffee breaks with family, friends and colleagues, anything that keeps you connected.
4. **Have a purpose** – if you are working from home, keep to your routines, our heads like routine and being organised!  
   If you are not working, decide what you would like to do, see the time as an opportunity, are there interests that you have not had time to do that you can use this time to explore? Look at online courses.
5. **Look at your finances** – Whilst there either is, or will be financial hardship, [there is a lot of information out there](https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/) that is free and can help to navigate through what is available. Ask for help, pick up the phone and negotiate what you need.
6. **Clear your space** – your environment can reflect how your head is!   
   Clear the clutter, feel in control of your space. In a time when there are things we can’t control, taking control of what you can is important.
7. **Exercise** – whatever that means to you. Walking (whilst distancing), an online class, weights (if you have them), cycling – expand your lung capacity and increase your heart rate.   
   It is possible that you could be healthier and more fit at the end of this time, than at the beginning!
8. **Avoid self-medicating** – using alcohol, substances, smoking, food, etc. as a coping mechanism, is counter -productive for your mental and physical health.
9. **Be creative** – being creative can be therapeutic. If your first response to this *is ‘I’m not creative at all’*, think again! This could be anything from drawing, colouring, writing, gardening, cooking, doing a jigsaw, playing with Lego, starting an online community group – again, whatever works for you.
10. **Humour** – its ok to have fun! Humour is a great way of lifting our mood and giving us perspective, so have a look for an old TV favourite or book and enjoy it, laugh with your friends and family, look out some old photos ... and enjoy.
11. **Rest well, eat well** – it is essential that we fuel ourselves in the right way. We may not have the foods we would like to have at the moment, but there are different foods to try, or new recipes with what we have got.   
    If work feels relentless at the moment, as a minimum[, try to sleep well](https://www.intra.staffordshire.gov.uk/healthsafetywellbeing/MindKind/Looking-after-yourself/Sleep.aspx), rest when you can and ask for help when you need it.
12. **Focus on your Wellbeing –** can you fit the [5 ways to wellbeing](https://www.intra.staffordshire.gov.uk/healthsafetywellbeing/MindKind/Looking-after-yourself/5-ways-to-wellbeing.aspx) into your day? Try some meditation, or mindfulness. Whatever is good for you, try to build something into your day to help you.
13. **Be grateful** – being grateful for what and who we have in our lives, grounds us and helps us to focus less on what we feel we don’t have – it’s a great antidote to fear and anxiety.

**Feel free to share this list with anyone you know or use the information within it as a springboard for conversations with your team on what they can do to stay well.**

