

Kirklees Educational Psychology Support Service –
Resources and advice for supporting parents/carers of children and young people around
COVID-19

Well-being tips for families

- Talk to your children and answer their questions. Ask about what they have heard about the virus and the situation so that you can correct possible misconceptions and reassure them.
- Avoid being too immersed in media coverage. Be mindful of the amount of things you are reading and watching, including social media – as this may add to worry and anxiety. Consider a few updates every day from trusted sources.
- Remember that people react differently to significant events. Some people – adults and children – may feel worried, some excited, some nothing much at all. Be reassured that different reactions are normal and ok.
- If your child seems worried, it may be good to distract themselves with something that takes their mind off their worries. You might also want to set aside 10-15 minutes each day for them to talk about any worries, and to reassure them.
- Remember to keep things positive and give children hope. For example, tell children that now many people are working to make this better and that even though it is serious, everyone is doing their best to help people.
- Try to keep familiar routines. Well-known routines in everyday life provide security and stability.
- Do nice things together and keep active. Make a plan and suggest some regular family times where you can play games, do some exercise together, or do other things that you know most of you like. Try to find a good balance between time together, and screen time.
- Keep in good contact with family and friends (via Facetime, Skype WhatsApp etc., following NHS guidance on 'social contact'). This will help children connect with others and know that others are thinking about them. It will also reassure them that others are well.
- As a parent you may be concerned yourself. Take care of yourself and make sure you have breaks, time to relax, and ask for help from others if you need.

These are some strategies that may be helpful to support children and young people's self-care at the current time.



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MANAGING STRESS: SELF-CARE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Prioritise

- Break up the stress into smaller and more manageable chunks.
- Make "To do" lists - divide items into Must vs Should vs Could.
- Forgive yourself if you don't achieve something - priorities can change quickly.

Focus

- Disrupt negative thinking by paying attention to the present moment.
- Look at and listen to the sights and sounds in the garden or driveway.
- Notice how your feet hit the floor when walking from room to room.
- Tune in to the smell and texture of your food as you eat.

Routine

- Minimise the impact of stress by maintaining structure and routine.
- Keep doing things which are familiar and meaningful.
- New decorating projects and clear-outs can give you goals to work towards.
- Plan a new meal, start a new book or try different genres for movie nights.

Connect

- Maintain support networks to promote belonging, safety and emotional regulation.
- Get in touch with friends or family that you haven't spoken to in a while.
- Use text, email, video chats or letters to check in and share news/gossip.
- Prioritise positive social media and avoid too much news coverage.

Breathe

- Take control of your breathing to stifle panic.
- Slow and rhythmic breathing in and out.
- Consider movement & vocalizations from the Breath-Body-Mind approach: <https://tinyurl.com/tk4nkq4>

Exercise

- Find creative ways of being active when indoors.
- Perform star jumps, lunges, planks and chair/wall push-ups during TV adverts.
- Learn a dance routine from YouTube.
- Schedule toning and bodyweight exercises each day: <https://tinyurl.com/y57d6cf7>

Gratitude

- Take more notice of the pleasures in life.
- Thank others for what they do and say more often.
- Get into the habit of listing or reflecting on three good things which you are grateful for each day.



Here is a story written for young children to help explain the upcoming over-70s isolation which may support children to understand why they may not see older family members during the COVID-19.

GRANDPA & THE COSY WEEKS

“Soon it will be time for The Cosy Weeks”, said Grandpa,

“What’s that?” said Small Rabbit

“It’s when us older rabbits spend a few weeks in the house doing cosy things?”

"Like what?"

“Well, I shall do cosy watching telly and cosy eating dinner and I might do some cosy gardening in my window box,” said Grandpa.

“Can I come?” said Little Rabbit.

“Not this time”, said Grandpa, “These Cosy Weeks are just for us older folk to help us not get ill.”

“What will you eat in the Cosy Weeks?” said Little Rabbit.

“I will eat all the yummy things in my cupboards and I might bake a special cosy cake. “

“But what happens if you run out of food?” said Little Rabbit.

“You can deliver food to my doorstep,” said Grandpa.

“Can I come in for tea?”

“Not this time”, said Grandpa. “But we can have a video tea.”

“A video tea?”

“Yes, I will cook up my tea in my house and you can cook up your tea in your house. And at five o’clock we will ring each other on video and we can talk whilst we eat our tea. It will be a special cosy-over-the-phone-tea.”

“What if your tea looks nicer than my tea,” said Little Rabbit, “and I want to eat your tea?”

“Hmmm,” thought Grandpa Rabbit...”How about I cook your favourite cosy tea and you can cook the same cosy tea, from the same recipe. Then we can eat the same cosy-over-the-phone-tea.”

“It will be just like we are in the same place, eating the same food, at the same time,” said Little Rabbit. I like the sound of that. Happy Cosy Weeks Grandpa.”