

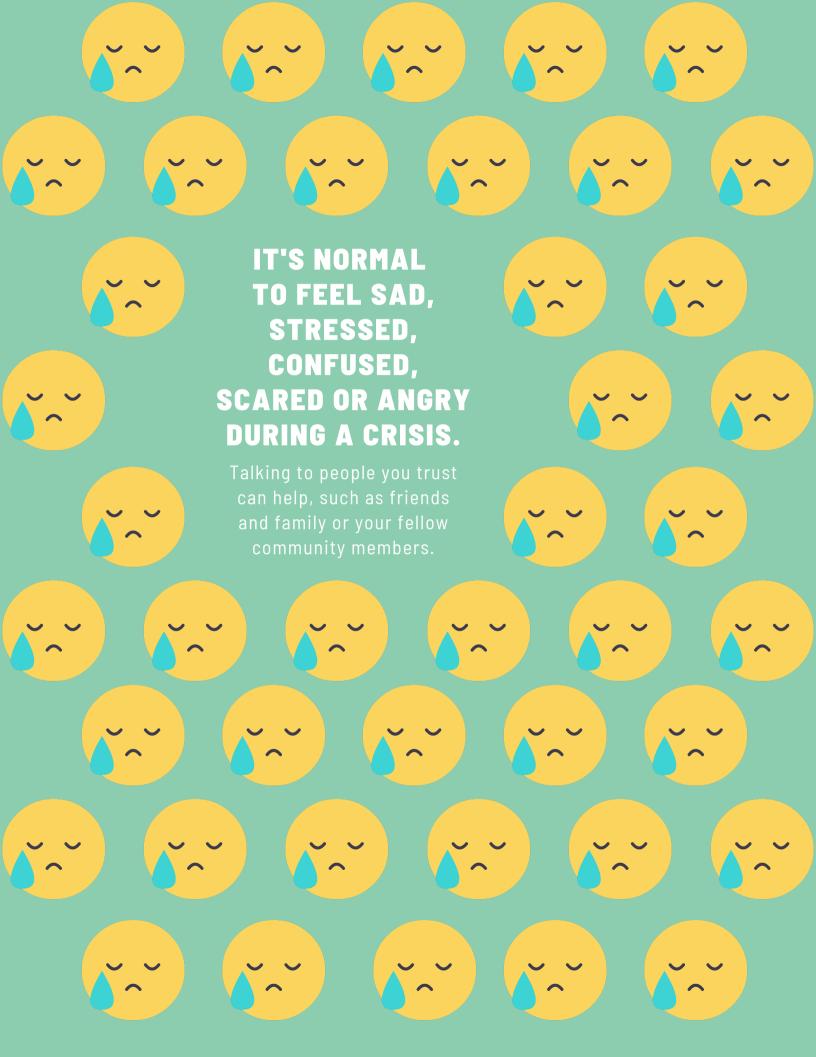
UNCERTAIN TIMES



INTRODUCTION

Managing uncertainty can be challenging at the best of times, but especially if you are already having a difficult time. At the moment the world can seem a very scary place, but you are not alone, it is okay to feel scared, worried or sad.

This booklet will aim to give you some of the facts around coronavirus, some top tips in managing how you are feeling and some resources to look at that may help you further.



WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS?

You had probably never heard of coronavirus until very recently but what exactly is it? Coronavirus is a virus similar to the flu, it is spread from person to person (within two metres and through coughs and sneezes). It can cause a lot of different symptoms but the main ones are:

- -a fever
- -a cough





HOW TO STOP IT

The best way to stop coronavirus spreading is to wash your hand regularly for at least 20 seconds and avoid contact with others. This is why the government have asked us all to stay at home. This means that we should only be with the people that we live with and should stay 2 metres away from people outside of our houses, We no longer go to school and we can only exercise out of the house once a day. This can feel very strange but there are ways to manage this.

KNOW THE FACTS!

Coronavirus has changed all of our lives for a while and it can be overwhelming and scary to think about, but it is important to know that a lot of what we read online is not true. If you want to know what's going on make sure that you look at sites like BBC News or the NHS website.

There are certain people who are more at risk but that does not mean that people "not at risk" don't have to follow the rules, as we all play a part in looking after each other and anyone can get the disease. But whilst some people are getting really ill or dying of the disease it is important to remember that most people have mild symptoms like the flu.

HEALTH

WORRIES

It is normal to worry about our health, but sometimes it can get on top of us and start impacting on our day to day lives. You might notice that you:

- -constantly worry about your health
- -frequently check your body for signs of illness, such as lumps, tingling or pain
- -are always asking people for reassurance that you're not ill
- -worry that your doctor or medical tests may have missed something
- -obsessively look at health information on the internet or in the media
- -avoid anything to do with serious illness, such as medical TV programmes
- -act as if you were ill (for example, avoiding physical activities because you say you are ill)



FEELINGS

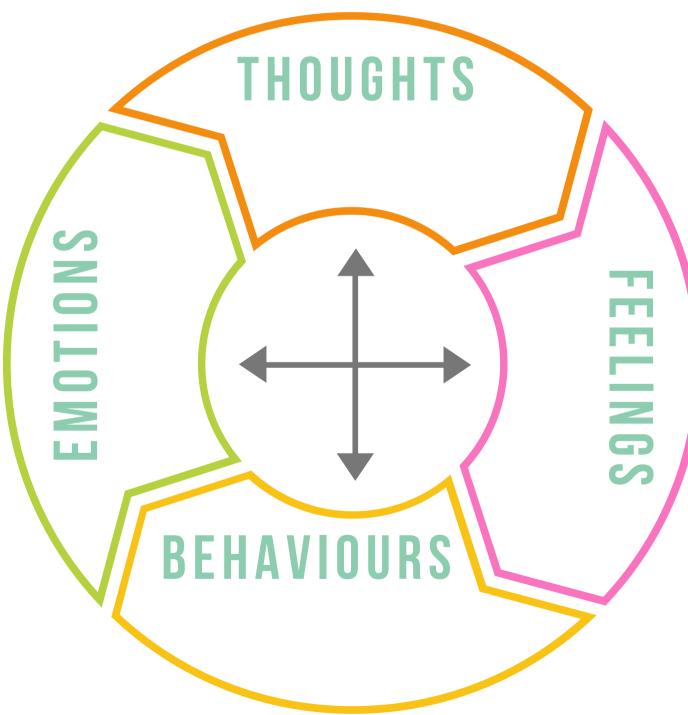
HOW THEY ALL LINK TOGETHER

When we are feeling worried it can impact on everything and cause a downwards spiral that can be difficult to get out of. It can cause us to stop doing things, which give us more time to worry, which can make our bodies feel strange, maybe tired, achy or tense and this in turn makes us feel more anxious.

THOUGHTS About symptoms and assumptions about how they will become worse. Anxiety, anger, sadness, tension, poor sleep or low frustration Fatigue, low energy appetite **BEHAVIOURS** Checking behaviours, or researching, or reassurance seeking

FEELINGS

YOUR FEELINGS AND HOW THEY ALL LINK TOGETHER, SEE IF YOU CAN FILL OUT THE DIAGRAM.



TOP TIPS

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOU

Keep a diary and record how often you check your body, ask for reassurance, look at health information.

- -Try and reduce the amount of time you spend each day checking your body, asking for reassurance and looking at health information.
- -Try and reduce the time spent doing each of these things by one minute a day and replace with another more enjoyable activity—See Section on keeping busy

Practice thought balancing which we will look at further on in this booklet.

Be aware of how much time you spend reading or watching information about the coronavirus. The constant stream of information can seem scary and make us feel low. Maybe limit yourself to checking this once a day and only look at reliable sources like the NHS or BBC.

THOUGHT

CHALLENGING

Our thoughts impact the way that we feel and when we are worried our brains tend to pick up on things happening in our bodies and make things seem worse and overwhelming. We don't expect you to be able to stop thinking negative thoughts but we would like to help you balance those thoughts.

You can do this by recording the thoughts that you have and seeing what type of thinking style or NAT (negative automatic thought) your brain uses when you were worried. Then once we have noticed these we can try to challenge these thoughts to balance them, this can be really tricky but you can try to use these techniques to help.

- Think about what you would tell a friend if they were thinking this thought.
- Imagine that you are in a court of law, would this thought hold as a fact or is it your opinion? What would someone say to prove it is not a fact?
- Do you believe this thought 100%? If not what makes up the other percent?
- Will this matter in 6 months time?

IDENTIFYING NATS (Negative Automatic Thoughts) & UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES



Catastrophising

(e.g. "This is awful, nothing will ever go right again").



Black and white thinking

(e.g. "I felt a bit better doing something different, but not a lot, so it's useless").



Personalisation

(e.g. "It must be my fault, I'm to blame, it's because I'm no good").



Overgeneralising

(e.g. "I tried talking to a friend once and that didn't work, so there's no point talking to anyone").



Tunnel vision

(e.g. remembering one bad thing when 10 good things were also said).



Jumping to conclusions

(e.g. "doing something different won't do any good").



Emotional reasoning

(e.g. "If I feel anxious so the party must must be going to be bad").



Mind reading

(e.g. "She thinks I'm weird", "He definitely doesn't want to play with me".)



Discounting/disqualifying

(e.g. "That doesn't count.", "That was just lucky - it would never happen again".)



Identifying faulty thinking

Sometimes we can fall into 'thinking traps'. Perhaps we think that things won't go to plan, or maybe we are worried about what things going wrong might mean for us. Sometimes our brains are too quick to decide what is happening without examining all the evidence. For example, "Hannah didn't say hello when I saw her in the corridor - she must not like me anymore!"

Looking for evidence

Like a good detective, it's tme to test our evidence! How can we find out if the thought we have is real? It's time to conduct an experiment to put that thought to the test. What do you think will happen? How likely is getting that result? Once you have completed your experiment, see if what happened is what you predicted or not - you might be suprised! Testing evidence is an important stage before we take the thought to court.



Now we have the results from our experiment, it's time to take a closer look at what we found out. Was the thought telling us the truth? Now is a good time to think about different ways of thinking about the problem. When a case goes to court it's important to think about the problem from both sides. Before, we thought Hannah didn't say hello because she didn't like us. Try reconsidering it (thinking of it from a different viewpoint). For example - "Maybe Hannah just didn't see me in the corridor. We went out together last weekend and we did have fun."



Now we've thought about our evidence and taken the problem to court, how do we feel? Does the thought seem more balanced now we've reconsidered it?

Once we begin to notice our thinking traps we can test out our thoughts and find out if they are true or not. We can take our tricky thoughts to court any time we notice them pop up. The more we practice taking our thoughts to court, the better we will be in stopping them in their tracks!

THOUGHT CHALLENGING SHEET 1

SITUATION THAT YOU HAD THE THOUGHT

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EMOTIONS YOU FELT
WHAT THOUGHT DID YOU HAVE
TYPE OF NAT
SITUATION THAT YOU HAD THE THOUGHT
EMOTIONS YOU FELT
WHAT THOUGHT DID YOU HAVE
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THOUGHT CHALLENGING SHEET 2

THOUGHT I WANT TO CHALLENGE

EVIDENCE THAT DISAGREES WITH THE THOUGHT

SOCIALISING

STAYING SOCIAL WHILST IN LOCKDOWN

Our social networks directly link to our mood and being in lock down we can feel lonely especially when we are more worried than usual.

Therefore it is important that we stay in touch with those who are important to us. Fortunately we live in a world where technology makes it easier for us. On top of your usual online socialising why not try these ways to stay in touch.



- HOUSEPARTY APP or FACEBOOK MESSENGER- These video call platform allows you to video call multiple friends and play games together.
- Join a virtual quiz night and make a team with your friends, or why not host your own?
- Join the online Task Master challenges with your friends and vote for your winner, or is you are feeling really creative why not host your own task master night? Look up #hometasking for ideas.
- Learn something new together, there are so many free amazing classes to join, Why not video call while you paint, cook, learn a language, work out?

DOING SCHOOL WITHOUT GOING TO SCHOOL

It is okay to have mixed feelings about not being at school, You might be happy one moment and then missing your friends and having structure then next. It might seem easier to just avoid doing your work altogether, but keeping up with your school work can help keep routine which is really important when you are feeling low and it will also help you when school returns to normal.

GET ORGANISED -

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO DO YOUR WORK AND SCHEDULE TIME TO DO EACH BIT.

REWARD YOURSELF -

YOU ARE DOING SO WELL JUST TO BE GIVING IT A GO WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH. SO TREAT YOURSELF WHEN YOU COMPLETE A BIT OF WORK.



TRY TO KEEP UP-

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TRY TO DO LITTLE BITS OF WORK REGULARLY TO KEEP UP +TO DATE WITH WHAT IS SET, SO YOU DON'T GET OVERWHELMED.

ASK FOR HELP -

IF YOU ARE FINDING THINGS HARD, IT IS OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP.
YOUR TEACHERS ARE STILL WORKING AND THEY UNDERSTAND
THAT WORKING AT HOME MAKES IT HARDER FOR YOU.



STAYING ACTIVE

Exercise has a huge impact on wellbeing not only physical but mental wellbeing too. It is important to stay active even though we may have to change the way we do this to stick to the rules, as this can improve our mood. Whether you normally exercise regularly or not, the lockdown is likely to have reduced your activity levels.

TRY SOMETHING NEW

There are loads of sites that are making online classes free to access to help keep people moving in lockdown, here are just a few.

Boxing: https://www.instagram.com/doyourumble/
Yoga:

https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene https://www.youtube.com/user/cexercize Dance:

https://www.youtube.com/user/popsugartvfit

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR ONE A DAY

The government has said that we can leave our houses for exercise such as; walking, running or cycling once a day, either alone or with our household. So make the most of that time and get outside. Fresh air is really good for our wellbeing especially when we have been stuck at home.

SCHEDULE EXERCISE IN EVERY DAY

Book in time to exercise in your schedule (see page 15) or join a class like Joe Wick's 9am PE classes.

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo
OTYIRfn6rYO



REFOCUS

When you have had a worry or when worry time is over it is important to refocus. There are lots of ways to do this but why not try this one.



Notice five things that you can see.







Four things that you can touch.



Three things that you hear.







Two things that you can smell.



One thing that you can taste.



Or you can try going for a walk, practising meditation, doing yoga, playing a game, calling a friend. Anything that take your mind off these worries and focuses back on the present moment.



RESOURCES

Young Minds info on Coronavirus

https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/

Mind -Looking after your mental wellbeing

https://www.mind.org.uk/informa tion-support/for-children-andyoung-people/looking-afteryour-wellbeing/#collapsee7546

Mindful gNATs App (Android only)

Free app with activities to help to relax and manage your thoughts.

Mood Tools App (IOS only)

Free app to help you record your thoughts or schedule activities to help manage your low mood.

Unicef - How to deal with the new normal

https://www.unicef.org/coronavir us/how-teenagers-can-protecttheir-mental-health-duringcoronavirus-covid-19

YoungScot - Looking after your wellbeing in a Coronavirus outbreak

https://young.scot/getinformed/national/how-to-lookafter-your-mental-wellbeing

NHS- a useful short guide explaining what health anxiety is and practical things you can do to overcome it.

https://tinyurl.com/yctdoagn.

You can also use it on the "Self Help" app for Andriods and IOS

CCI - free online support and detailed information on health anxiety and coping with it

https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/CCI/Consumer%20Modules/Helping%20Health%20Anxiety/Helping%20Health%20Anxiety%20-%2001%20-

%20Understanding%20Health%20Anxiety.pdf

Get Self Help - more information on managing health anxiety https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/healthanxiety.htm

YouTube- what is health anxiety

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMyl7lrslvQ

Living with health anxiety https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAIRXuZqQs

Teens In Crisis - <u>www.ticplus.org.uk</u>

Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning - www.ghll.org.uk

On Your Mind Gloucestershire - https://www.onyourmindglos.nhs.uk/

This booklet was created by Young Minds Matter Gloucestershire, part of the School's Mental Health Support Team.





