

Mental health and wellbeing during the Coronavirus epidemic

Guidance from Public Health England (summarised) [Click [here](#) for the full guidance]

The coronavirus outbreak is going to impact everyone's daily life. You may be bored, frustrated, lonely, or feel low, worried and anxious, or be concerned about your health or that of those close to you. Everyone reacts differently to events in the way we think, feel and behave. It's important that you take care of your mind as well as your body and to **get further support if you need it**.

What can help your mental health and wellbeing

- Find ways to CONNECT with other people - by phone, by post or online
- Help and SUPPORT OTHERS if you can
- TALK about any worries you have with family and friends
- EAT AS WELL AS YOU CAN and take some EXERCISE
- Get ENOUGH SLEEP – this will make a big difference to feelings of anxiety or worry
- When difficult feelings threaten to overwhelm you, FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL, such as getting good information, or taking action to make yourself feel better prepared
- It is OK to ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SOME THINGS ARE OUT OF YOUR CONTROL right now. Repetitive thoughts about the situation are not helpful – when you notice them, switch your focus to something else.
- LIMIT how often you check social media and public information – 24-hour news raises anxiety
- GET THE FACTS – look for high-quality information that will help you accurately determine your own or other people's needs
- Think about a NEW DAILY ROUTINE and how you can adapt as the situation changes
- INCLUDE THINGS YOU REALLY ENJOY– doing what we love makes us feel better
- Keep your mind active and set yourself some ATTAINABLE GOALS - achieving our goals gives us a sense of control and purpose
- TAKE TIME TO RELAX and focus on the present
- GET OUTSIDE ONCE A DAY if possible, and in natural surroundings if you can do so

If you care for other people

You may be worried about how to ensure care for those who rely on you. If you provide care or support to someone you don't live with, and are concerned about them, you can contact Cheshire East Council on **0300 123 5034** and ask to be connected to their 'People Helping People' service, or search for it online.

You can also call Audlem & District Community Action's **Coronavirus Home Support Service** on **07984 785907** to get in touch with our Carers Support Worker if you need local support.

Managing physical symptoms triggered by stress and anxiety

It is not unusual to have short-lived physical symptoms when you are feeling low or anxious, for example:

- faster, irregular or more noticeable heartbeat
- feeling lightheaded and dizzy
- headaches
- chest pains
- loss of appetite

If you are concerned about your physical symptoms, contact [NHS 111 online](#).

Advice for older people

It is natural for older people, particularly those with pre-existing medical conditions, to feel concerned or affected by changes you have to make to your daily life. The following suggestions may help with any difficult feelings and will help you look after your mental health:

Stay connected - draw on any support you might have through your friends, family and other networks. Try to stay in touch with those around you, over the phone, by post, or online. If you have been advised to stay at home, let people know how you would like to stay in touch and build that into your routine.

Get practical help - If you need help, for example with shopping or running errands, ask for it. Let those around you know what they can do.

If you need help but you're not sure who to contact, [Age UK](#) runs an advice line (**0800 678 1602** – every day 8am-7pm) that can put you in touch with local services.

Audlem & District Community Action (ADCA) is now providing support for local people through its Coronavirus Home Support Service – call **07984 785907** if you need help.

Advice for people living with dementia

You may feel concerned about coronavirus and how it could affect you. [Alzheimer's Society](#) have published information on coronavirus for people affected by dementia.

Additional advice for people with specific mental health needs

The full **Public Health England Guidance on Mental Health and Mental Wellbeing** (which you can read by clicking [here](#)) has specific advice for:

- People with existing mental health problems
- Managing panic, anxiety or feelings of being trapped or claustrophobia
- If you are reducing your drinking significantly
- People with a learning disability
- Autistic people
- Dealing with a mental health crisis or emergency

REMEMBER - It is important to GET HELP if you are struggling

You may find that the added stress of the current situation could have a big impact on your mental health or that of your family. You may feel that you are having a mental health crisis as you no longer feel able to cope or be in control of your situation. You may feel great emotional distress or anxiety, or feel that you cannot cope with day-to-day life or work, or think about self-harm or even suicide, or experience or hear voices (hallucinations).

If this sort of situation happens, you should get immediate expert assessment and advice to identify the best course of action. **Ring 111** for help or, in an emergency, ring **999**.

[Samaritans](#) has a free to call service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, if you want to talk to someone in confidence. Call them on 116 123.