



Mental Health and Wellbeing Guidance for Parents and Carers



The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is going to have an impact on everyone's daily lives, as the government and NHS take necessary steps to manage the outbreak, reduce transmission and treat those who need medical attention. It may be difficult, but following guidance on social distancing, or staying at home, you are helping to protect yourself, your family, the NHS and your community.

During this time you may be bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also feel low, worried, anxious, or be concerned about your health or that of those close to you. Everyone reacts differently to events and changes in the way that we think, feel and behave vary between different people and over time. It's important that you take care of your mind as well as your body and to get further support if you need it.

All of the staff at Archbishop Cranmer are available to contact for advice and support during this time, please contact us via the Home Learning pages on our website and we will get back to you to offer guidance, or someone to talk to. We are used to being able to chat on the playground, so please, please keep in touch.



To find out more, watch this video from Anna Freud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxIDKZH3-E>

Consider how to connect with others: Maintaining relationships with people you trust is important for your mental wellbeing. Think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family via telephone, video calls or social media instead of meeting in person – whether it's people you normally see often or connecting with old friends.

Help and support others: Think about how you could help those around you – it could make a big difference to them and can make you feel better too. Could you message a friend or family member nearby? Are there community groups that you could join to support others locally? Remember it's important to do this in line with guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19) to keep yourself and everyone safe. And try to be accepting of other people's concerns, worries or behaviours.

Talk about your worries: It is quite common to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember that this is a difficult time for everyone and sharing how you are feeling and the things you are doing to cope with family and friends can help them too. If you don't feel able to do that, there are people you can speak to via NHS recommended helplines or you could find support groups online to connect with.

- Anxiety UK – Charity providing support if you have been diagnosed with an anxiety condition. Phone: 03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 10pm; Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 8pm) www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- CALM – the Campaign Against Living Miserable, for men aged 15-35. Phone: 0800 585 858 www.thecalmzone.net
- Men's Health Forum – 24/7 stress support for men by text, chat and email. www.menshealthforum.org.uk
- Mental Health Foundation – Provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities. www.mentalhealth.org.uk
- Mind – Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems. Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm) www.mind.org.uk
- Samaritans – confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair. Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline) www.samaritans.org.uk
- Young Minds – Information on child and adolescent mental health. Services for parents and professionals. Phone Parents' helpline: 0808 802 5544 (Mon-Fri 9:30am-4pm) www.youngminds.org.uk
- NSPCC – Children's charity dedicated to ending child abuse and child cruelty. Phone: 0800 1111 for Childline for children (24-hour helpline) 0808 800 5000 for adults concerned about a child (24-hour helpline) www.nspcc.org.uk

- Refuge – advice on dealing with domestic violence. Phone: 0808 2000 247 (24-hour helpline) www.refuge.org.uk
- Family Lives – Advice on all aspects of parenting. Phone: 0808 800 2222 (Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm and Sat-Sun, 10am-3pm)

For more links to Mental Health Helplines visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/>

Look after your physical wellbeing: Your physical health has a big impact on how you are feeling emotionally and mentally. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour which in turn can make you feel worse. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water, exercise inside where possible and outside once a day, and try to avoid smoking, alcohol and drugs. If you are able to go outside, consider walking or gardening (keeping the recommended 2 metres from others as outlined in the social distancing guidance). If you are staying at home, you can find free easy 10 minute work outs from Public Health England (<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/move-more/home-workout-videos/>) or other exercise videos to try at home on the NHS Fitness Studio (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/>). Sport England also has good tips for keeping active at home: <https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout>

Look after your sleep: Feeling anxious or worried can make it harder to get a good night's sleep. Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how you feel mentally and physically, so it's important to get enough. Try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment. The Every Mind Matters sleep page provides practical advice on how to improve your sleep: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep/>

Try to manage difficult feelings: Many people find the news about coronavirus (COVID-19) concerning. However, some people may experience such intense anxiety that it becomes a problem. Try to focus on the things you can control, including where you get information from and actions to make yourself feel better prepared. It is okay to acknowledge some things that are outside of your control right now but constant repetitive thoughts about the situation which lead you to feel anxious or overwhelmed are not helpful. The Every Mind Matters page on anxiety (<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/anxiety/>) and NHS mental wellbeing audio guides (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>) provide further information on how to manage anxiety. Apps like Calm (www.calm.com) and Headspace (www.headspace.com) encourage mindfulness and support feelings of anxiety.

Manage your media and information intake: 24-hour news and constant social media updates can make you more worried. If it is affecting you, try to limit the time you spend watching, reading, or listening to media coverage of the outbreak. It may help to only check the news at set times or limiting to a couple of checks a day. Radio stations such as Radio 4 do not have news bulletins, so are great for breaks away from the news.

Get the facts: Gather high-quality information that will help you to accurately determine your own or other people's risk of contracting coronavirus (COVID-19) so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as GOV.UK, or the NHS website, and fact check information that you get from newsfeeds, social media or from other people. Think about how possibly inaccurate information could affect others too, especially your children. Try not to share information without fact-checking against credible sources.

Think about your new daily routine: Life is changing for us all for a while. Whether you are staying at home or social distancing, you are likely to see some disruption to your normal routine. Think about how you can adapt and create positive new routines – try to engage in useful activities (such as cleaning, cooking or exercise) or meaningful activities (such as reading or calling a friend). You might find it helpful to write a plan for your day or your week. It's okay if this plan doesn't go as expected, adapt plans as you go to work out what works best for your family's equilibrium.

Do things you enjoy: When you are anxious, lonely or low you may do things that you usually enjoy less often, or not at all. Focussing on your favourite hobby, learning something new or simply taking time to relax indoors should give you some relief from anxious thoughts and feelings and can boost your mood. If you can't do the things you normally enjoy because you are staying at home, try to think about how you could adapt them, or try something new. There

are lots of free tutorials and courses online and people are coming up with innovative online solutions like online pub quizzes and streamed live music concerts.

Set goals: Setting goals and achieving them gives a sense of control and purpose – think about things you want or need to do that you can still do at home. It could be watching a film, reading a book or learning something online.

Keep your mind active: Read, write, play games, do crossword puzzles, sudokus, jigsaws or drawing and painting. Find something that works for you.

Take time to relax and focus on the present: This can help with difficult emotions, worries about the future, and can improve wellbeing. Relaxation techniques can also help some people to deal with feelings of anxiety. For useful resources see Every Mind Matters and NHS' mindfulness page (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/>). Calm and Headspace are perfect for this, too.

If you can, once a day get outside, or bring nature in: Spending time in green spaces can benefit both your mental and physical wellbeing. If you can't get outside much you can try to still get these positive effects by spending time with the windows open to let in fresh air, arranging space to sit and see a nice view (if possible) and get some natural sunlight, or get out into the garden if you can. Remember that social distancing guidelines enable you to go outside to exercise once a day as long as you keep 2 metres apart from others who are not members of your household group.

What to do if your child is anxious about coronavirus:

- Encourage them to talk to someone about their feelings
- Support them with ways to keep calm – yoga, mindfulness and meditation can help to ease anxiety
- Try not to shield your child from the news, as it's likely they will find out somehow from school, being online or from friends.
- Talk to your child about what is going on. you could start by asking them what they have heard.
- Try to answer their questions and reassure them in an age appropriate manner. Remember, you do not need to know all the answers, but talking can help them feel calm.
- Reassure your child that it is unlikely they will get seriously ill, and if they do you feel ill you will look after them. Your child might be concerned about who will look after you if you catch the virus. Let them know the kind of support you have as an adult so that they don't feel they need to worry about you.
- Give some practical tips to your child about how they can look after themselves. For example, show them how to wash their hands properly, and remind them when they should be doing it.
- Keep as many regular routines as possible, so that your child feels safe and that things are stable.
- Spend time doing a positive activity with your child (e.g. reading, playing, painting, cooking) to help reassure them and reduce their anxiety. This is also a great way of providing a space for them to talk through their concerns, without having a 'big chat'. For activities ideas, visit our starting a conversation with your child guide.
- Encourage your child to think about the things they can do to make them feel safer and less worried.
- Be aware that your child may want more close contact with you at this time and feel anxious about separation. Try to provide this support whenever possible.
- Remember to look after yourself too. If you yourself are feeling worried, or anxious about coronavirus, talk to someone you trust who can listen and support you.

Useful links and resources:

- Comic all about Coronavirus - <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?t=1585654887402>
- Small Paul, a story written by a Year 2 teacher especially for supporting children during this time - https://drive.google.com/file/d/18NT_KELO4ZY3UNGWx7Kgl04noWtEUD9/view?fbclid=IwAR1sXhFJgrbGwX-m1oyur9OmGP5zSvX-AOwQ7eWdn36ooKj2yQ-Fwg3V_Og
- Coronavirus story to help explain the virus to children - <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/coronavirus-story-for-children/>

**There are lots more useful links on our school website, which we are adding to regularly.
See also: <https://www.archbishopcranmer.co.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>**