

Scouts
Cambridgeshire



Supporting Young
People Through
Lockdown and
Covid-19

On Tuesday 17th March 2020, all Face-to-Face Scouting Activities were suspended.

On Friday 20th March 2020, all schools closed to the majority of students.

On Wednesday 25th March 2020, a strict lockdown was imposed.

Three months on and schools are still not open to all students, face-to-face Scouting is still not back, and whilst lockdown is easing it could be a very long time before life returns to normal.

Is it any wonder then that we are facing a mental health crisis?

Young Minds surveyed over 2000 young people and found that over 80% felt that the lockdown had had a negative impact on their mental health.

With many Scouting sections now running online programmes using Zoom, Teams, Facebook etc. we are starting to see the impact this has had on our Young People. As their leaders, it is us who they will often turn to in order to express how they are feeling, and many are unsure how to respond.

This booklet has a variety of activities, information, facts & figures, and general guidance to support you in supporting your Young People.

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ACTIVITIES

Stress Sock

Fill an old sock with something soft.

You could use bubble wrap, foam packaging, a washing up or shower sponge, rolled up socks or scrunched up wrapping paper.

Tie a knot in the top of the sock or use a hair bobble or elastic band to keep the contents in.

Squeeze and release the sock in a rhythm that feels right for you.

The Question

Pause and notice what you are saying, doing or thinking.

Write it down.

Ask yourself if that thought or activity is helping you or not right now.

If it's not helping, choose to think or do something different.

You could try getting out of bed and doing 10 star jumps, thinking about a happy memory instead of a sad one or chatting to a friend online instead of feeling alone.

Find Freedom

When you're not able to see friends or go out you can feel trapped. It's can help to notice the freedom you do have, even if it's much smaller than you're used to.

It might be that you can choose to go to a different room, look out of the window, connect with friends online or set up a video call with relatives.

Think of someone else who has less freedom than you and call or message them so they feel less alone.

Nature

Spend 5 or 10 minutes every day to connect with nature.

Look out of the window and watch the clouds. Look at holiday photos on the beach or in the countryside. Watch a video of the sea or a walk through a forest. Listen to birds singing or dogs barking nearby. Imagine being outdoors somewhere calm and peaceful by a waterfall or on a mountain path.

You could also change your home screen on your phone or computer to a nature picture or your favourite animal.

Letter to Yourself

Choose a day that you're feeling happy and write a letter to yourself, either on paper or on your phone, to read when things are more difficult or you're struggling to cope.

Remember to include advice about things that have helped you to cope in the past.

Read your letter to remind yourself that you have days when you feel less anxious and your mood improves.

Sense Drawer

Make a space in a cupboard or drawer for things that will help you when you're feeling anxious or panicked.

Choose things with a noticeable smell, taste, feel, colour or that make a noise.

You could include shampoo or soap to smell, a mint to taste, a fluffy sock to touch, a brightly coloured drawing or wrapping paper to look at or a plastic container with beads or dried pasta in to shake.

Let it Go Box/Worry Monster

Find a box, something small like a shoe box or a chocolate box. You could decorate it as a monster.

Write down what's worrying you on a piece of paper and place it in the box.

Tell yourself that you don't need to think about the worry at the moment and you can let it go and leave it in the box for now.

You can do this as many times as you like.

Calm Aid Kit

Find 4 or more items to hold or feel.

You can choose things like a blanket to wrap around yourself, a smooth stone to hold, something that was given to you by someone important to you, the lyrics of a happy song or a poem that makes you feel positive .

Put them in a bag or a box in your room. When you feel under pressure, worried or upset choose 1 item out of the box to hold while you remember a time that you felt safe and calm . After 2 or 3 minutes replace it and choose another.

You can do this as many times as you like.

Breathe & Sigh

Breathe in through your nose

Make a big sigh and drop your shoulders downwards as you breathe out through your mouth

Repeat 4 times

Calming Words

Breathe in while you say to yourself "I feel calm"

Breath out while you say to yourself "I let go of stress"

Breath in while you say to yourself "Feel calm"

Breathe out and say to yourself "Let go of stress"

Square Breathing

Breathe in as you count 1, 2, 3, 4

Hold as you count 1, 2, 3, 4

Breathe out as you count 1, 2, 3, 4

Hold as you count 1, 2, 3, 4

Keep your counting even and trace your finger along the 4 edges of a box of tissues or a dice if that helps you to keep focus

Repeat 3 times

Connection

Write 1 or 2 words about how you're feeling.

Using a notebook or a your mood journal draw a heart or a star for yourself and write 3 kind words or messages to yourself.

Remind yourself that no matter how difficult things feel, you are not alone - someone in your street, neighbourhood, town or city is likely to be feeling similar emotions to you right now.

Draw a heart or a star for someone else who is feeling like you do and write 3 kind words for them too.

You can do this for as many people you like.

APPS

Dragon in the Attic

<http://myhealthapps.net/app/details/501/dragon-in-the-attic>

Dragon in the Attic is a mental health app centred on anti-bullying ideas. It is a fun, replayable, game for 8 - 12 year old boys and girls about health and wellbeing choices which give players greater awareness and confidence, by getting kids to look after a dragon in an attic.

Positive Penguins

<http://positivepenguins.com/>

The app aims to help children understand their feelings come from their own thoughts not the situations. Often the anxiety and stress we feel comes from not real threats, but stories we make up in our heads. The four positive penguins take you on a journey to help you understand that feelings arise from your thinking and if you challenge your negative thoughts successfully you may be able to see things in a more realistic and even optimistic way.

Mindful Gnats

<https://appgrooves.com/app/mindful-gnats-by-handaxe-limited>

Mindful Gnats is an app designed to teach young people simple mindfulness and relaxation skills. It can be used to help mindfulness practice when playing the Mindful Gnats desktop game (see www.peskygnats.com for details) or as a stand alone aid to mindful practice. These skills can help to reduce stress, and improve awareness of your body, mind and world.

Chill Panda

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/chill-panda/>

Chill Panda is for children and adults who want to learn how to manage stress and worry and feel better.

Beaver & Cub Resource Pack:

Change and Loss Activities – help Young People understand that we all change over time; help them understand how to support a friend who has lost someone; support them to handle their own grief at the loss of a loved one.

Coping Toolbox - Life is upside down right now. Helping your child to find ways to relax and cope is vital to help their mind and body switch off from their worries.

Coping with the Death of a Loved One – Information and strategies to support Young People to cope with death.

Coronavirus Story – For any youngster who doesn't understand about the virus, this simple story explains it in an easy to understand way.

Dealing with Anger – Strategies and discussion topics to help Young People understand that it's okay to feel angry.

Dealing with Change - We can't change the current situation, but we can look for the good things about it to help ourselves feel better. And you can remind them that this won't last forever!

Distraction Activities - If your child is feeling bored, lonely, sad or scared in lockdown, doing a fun activity to distract them from their difficult feelings can really help.

Feelings Activities – Vocabulary based activities to find ways of expressing feelings.

Going Back to School – What might have changed for our Young People when they return to school and how will they cope with these changes and their own worries.

Feelings Diary – Track and monitor the way youngsters are feeling and what is causing each feeling.

Relaxation Activities - Being in lockdown can be stressful, and lots of us are feeling anxious and on edge right now.

Self-Care Kit – Lots of activities to encourage children to see the best in any given situation.

Staying Connected – Who are they missing? How could they keep in touch?

Ways to Feel Better – Strategies to help when children are feeling emotional.

Worry Jar – Similar idea to the Worry Monster and Let it Go Box

Information & Advice

Ask them how you can help them feel better. Children are unique and resourceful, so it's important to keep the communication open. Even if there is no easy answer, they will hear that you have noticed them in the midst of the crisis. Be aware that children and young people will be hearing news broadcasts and adult conversations – they know when we are worried, and they will be hearing stories of death everyday, which is deeply unsettling.

If your child has questions about what is happening, tell them in a way that they can understand.

- Respond in an open and supportive way; children are likely to need extra love and attention during this time.
- Talk to them about what is happening. Encourage them to tell you about how they feel. Ask open questions to help identify and name their concerns.
- Give clear and simple messages, repeat as necessary if children ask again.
- Acknowledge and normalise their concerns.

As adults, we sometimes respond to children's worries by saying,

“Don't worry about that”.

Instead, listen to and acknowledge their worries

- Validate their worries e.g. “That must feel scary”
- Normalise their worries e.g. “I felt scared like that when...”
- Help them process their worries e.g. “Even though we might feel worried, these are all the reasons why we are actually very safe...” By supporting children, listening to and acknowledging their fears, we teach them how to process their worries and help them by being understanding and supportive.

Children and young people were asked by Unicef what they were most worried about and here's how some of them responded:

Almost 40% are worried about not seeing their friends

1 in 3 are concerned about parents or guardians getting ill

Nearly 30% of children and young people worry about catching coronavirus

17% worry about staying safe and 13% worry about the safety of their friends



ACTIVITIES

Physical Exercise.

You can release any stress, anger or tension you have! Doing exercise is also refreshing and gives you time away from work, your phone or staying in doing nothing all day. Being active can help your mind and body to feel better!

Colour Therapy

As a form of self-care, this could involve looking at or handling things in colours you find calming. Anecdotally, people believe that while red promotes anxiety, blue can have a soothing effect. Others say that pink reduces aggression. Because everyone is different, it's more important just to spend the time with the colours that you find uplifting, whether that's by noticing them in nature or looking at pictures online.

Time away from Technology

When we feel like we are constantly attached to everyone and all that is happening in the wider world it can become exhausting. That's one of the reasons why lots of people find time away from social media a really important part of their daily self-care (even if it does feel weird at first!)

Creative Writing

Creative writing can be an amazing way of expressing the thoughts and feelings you're experiencing. Some people find that it helps them realise how they're feeling about a particular situation if they write it into a story, because they empathise more with the character in the story than with themselves. Or it might feel cathartic to write a poem about what you're going through, rather than feeling the weight of carrying it around inside you.

Understanding Negative Thoughts

It's often useful to recognise that a lot of our fears or negative thoughts about ourselves are events happening internally in our heads rather than in 'reality' around us, though they feel very real to us when we experience them. Becoming aware of them, noticing them or analysing them a bit can help us to prevent them from taking over, shaping the way we see ourselves or affecting our self-esteem. You could try asking yourself when these thoughts started and look for any triggers.

Meditation

Meditation is designed to help train attention and awareness, and promotes mental and emotional clarity. There's lots of different ways to do it, and many find that focusing the mind on a particular object, thought or activity helps them achieve a calm state. Lots of people also find that meditation helps them regulate their breathing, which can minimise the activity of the sympathetic nervous system, which is the part of us responsible for the 'fight or flight' stress response. As a result, many people report feeling reduced symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression or pain and increased feelings of wellbeing, peace and self-perception. At the very least, it can encourage you to take time out for yourself.

Coding

Learning a new skill can be exciting and incredibly rewarding. Learning to code is an activity that you can carry out methodically in lots of small steps, which might add some structure to your week and give you a building sense of satisfaction. [freecodecamp.org](https://www.freecodecamp.org) is a completely free, non profit organisation where you can learn to code by completing a series of little challenges on your browser, taking you from complete beginner to actually completing coding jobs for charities in order to gain experience. You might find the routine calming, or that your confidence and practical work skills are improved.

Alone Time

Have you ever felt as if you are just fed up of people, humans, mankind everywhere? We have! Most of us find being with others can just what we need at times, but we also need our space and alone time once in a while.

What you do during that time is up to you. Do something creative or arty, write, play on your Xbox. There's loads of possibilities, just make sure you can relax and get a breather for a bit.

Journals

Writing things down, by using a journal or a diary, can help you to defuse a situation that you have kept inside you. For some people, they use journals as a way of sharing difficult feels, expressing words that they would not be able to say out loud. Others use journals to track their mental health, highlighting the good days and the bad so that they learn more about themselves and their mental health.

Distraction Techniques

Having distraction techniques can help you to focus on something else when you're in a panicked, anxious or distressed state. Although it may seem like a difficult thing to do, it can become a useful and healthy way of coping with the situation. Here are some ideas that you could try out, or ask your close friends and relatives to do with you when you need support:

Counting things around you (e.g how many blue things are in your room)

Doodling or colouring

Counting backwards from 10, then from 25, and then 50

Focussing on your breathing, by breathing in for four, holding your breath for four and then breathe out for four ([link to meditation tile](#))

Imagine a place where you feel safe, and then imagine the sounds you can hear in that place

Hope Box

A hope box (or a whatever-you'd-like-to-call-it box) is a place to put special memory items or little trinkets, such as photos of an important day, concert or train tickets, gifts or notes that friends or family have given, or even receipts for things you'd like to remember enjoying. You could put in letters from your friends with words of encouragement, or birthday cards from loved ones. Some people might like to include smells that make them happy, such as a perfume tester or some dried lavender.

Pilates

Pilates was first created by someone who felt there was a strong link between mental and physical health.

Some people use it to support their recovery from certain medical conditions, because it is a gentle form of exercise. Practitioners have noticed that it helps posture and muscle tone, but also relieves stress and tension through the body.

Pilates is different to Yoga because it focusses on a continuous flow of movement, rather than static moves, and some find this to be particularly calming.

Spend time with Animals

Lots of people find spending time with animals a really fun and soothing way to help their mental health. This could look from playing with or stroking a pet, volunteering at a local animal rescue project or visiting a local farm, zoo or pet shop. A lot of people find it very calming whilst also helping them to get away from their usual thoughts.

Walking

Taking some time to walk, just for the sake of walking, and without thinking too much about where you're going or why, can be an act of self-care. If you go alone, it's a type of walking that is just for you and time spent only on yourself – although it's important to make sure you're safe, too. Letting someone know that you're going on a walk will reassure others that you are not lost or missing. Walking with friends or people you are close to you can help as well, as it gives you a space to talk that doesn't feel too claustrophobic or pressured.

Listening to Music

A lot of young people said listening to music helped them manage their feelings in several different ways:

Listening to music you know you enjoy to help improve your mood

Listening to music really loudly to release built up tension/anger

Listening to music similar to the emotion you're feeling to release pent up emotions

Listening to music that is the opposite to what your feeling e.g Calming music when you are feeling anxious to help soothe yourself

Challenge Negative Thoughts

The same way you might if a friend was feeling down on themselves, it can really help to think of some reasons to question your negative feelings. We can be very hard on ourselves and it's much easier to fall into a pattern of self-criticism than it is of self-compassion - but practicing being kind to yourself can help to lift your spirits. For example, if you feel anxious and self-critical, you can try telling yourself that that is your anxiety speaking, not you, and that it will eventually pass without harming you.

Some people find it helps to visualise their negative thoughts in the mind's eye as balloons, and let them fly away.

Listen to Podcasts

Listening to podcasts can be helpful for self-care in a number of different ways. Like listening to music, they can provide a distraction from difficult thoughts or feelings. You can just put on your headphones and take some time out listening to something that you enjoy or that interests you, whether you're in your room or on a train, walking in a park or just needing 5 minutes break from your day.

There are podcasts on many different topics, including mental health. Some podcasts might make you laugh or feel different emotions, which might help you feel that you're not on your own, especially if you're experiencing certain difficulties. You may even find that podcasts help connect you with other people who have shared interests or like the same podcast series. They are also a good way to discover new interests and learn about new things, or to find inspiration and motivation.

Photography

Photography can be a great way of distracting yourself from your thoughts or, alternatively, a great form of self-expression. Being creative is an opportunity to express difficult thoughts and emotions that can't otherwise be put into words.

Capturing the beauty of the world on camera can be soothing and being in control of a camera and what you take pictures of can be empowering in times of distress. Some have also said that photography also helps them be 'in the moment'.

Setting yourself a photo challenge can also help you to leave the house – maybe plot a walk through a local park and take pictures of the wildlife or trees.

Tai Chi and Qigong

Tai-Chi and Qigong are traditional Chinese activities that have roots in martial arts training, and are also widely practiced for their health benefits. Qigong is about balancing your 'qi', which translates as life energy. It involves coordinating slow flowing movements with deep rhythmic breathing and is said to promote a calm, meditative state of mind. YouTube is a great place to search for introductory videos to see if it's something you'd like to practice regularly.

Tai-Chi moves relate to the philosophy of yin and yang, the idea that seemingly opposing forces are actually complementary, connected and essential to each other. Many people associate this practice with mindfulness, because of how it asks that you focus your mind solely on your breathing and the light movements.

Learn a new Language

For many people, learning a new language can be a useful distraction technique when you're feeling low or anxious. Learning something new, particularly a language, requires concentration so it can allow you to take your mind off unwanted thoughts. As well as being a great distraction, learning a new language can be very satisfying and give you a sense of accomplishment, which can help to boost your mood.

Some people enjoy learning a foreign language as learning foreign words and learning to translate it occupies your brain whereas some people may enjoy learning sign language as it distracts both your brain and hands. This can be very useful for people struggling with harmful urges.

Reading

Reading (or bibliotherapy) has been a source of comfort for lots of people for a long time. Here's how some people use it to help when they are struggling with their emotions:

Go back to a book you've read before that was particularly good or felt really comforting

Read a Fantasy or Science Fiction book to completely escape from your mind for a bit

Making Music

Learning an individual instrument can be very beneficial, as it gives you some space to be alone when you practice. Many find this quite a mindful act, as the body is occupied with playing and your thoughts and emotions can surface slowly while you play.

Certainly, if difficult feelings become too overwhelming, making music can be a soothing

outlet either to express those emotions creatively or provide a distraction from harmful impulses or thoughts.

Listening to music can increase the levels of dopamine, the feel-good chemical, in your brain. So, if you're making music, those sounds can have the same effect.

Yoga

Lots of people say that yoga has helped them with their mental health. On a physical level, there is evidence to suggest that it calms your nervous system, making you feel more relaxed and less anxious.

By doing yoga you are actively deciding to take care of your body, which may also help promote healthy eating and exercise habits, and improve your sense of self-worth. One of the big ideas behind self-care generally is the notion that you deserve that care, and you are worthy of the time and effort you spend on it, and yoga can help remind you of that.

Crafting

Many report that making something yourself, whether it's a greetings card, a cushion or something as small as a bookmark, gives a sense of satisfaction, and the process of making helps to distract from everyday worries and events, giving the mind a chance to switch off. Some people compare crafting to mindfulness, in that focussing on a repeated motion such as sewing or colouring can have meditative effects, bringing you into the moment and putting to one side the constant activity of our thoughts.

Dance

Dance is often thought of as a great way to change how you feel. Some people prefer to learn a specific form of dance, like ballet, tap or jazz.

Do remember, though, that because dance can be a form of artistic expression you don't have to follow the rules or learn a specific type of dance – you can also just find a space to move (with or without music) in a way that feels natural or intuitive to you, whether alone in your bedroom or online with a group of friends.

Dance therapists think that mental and emotional difficulties can be held in the body in the form of muscle tension and constrained movement patterns. Releasing those tensions can have a relieving effect for both the body and the mind.

Baking & Cooking

If you have the equipment, baking or cooking can be a relaxing activity – at least for some people! It's not everyone's favourite thing to do, but, for those who enjoy it, spending some time making a nutritious meal or sweet treat from scratch is a satisfying and rewarding experience. Lots of people report that it allows their mind to switch off as they become absorbed in the task of preparing food, almost like a mindfulness exercise.

If you're looking for an easier version of this, you could try out some microwave recipes, which will save you time and energy if you're having an off day.

Nature

Nowadays, it can feel really easy to end up spending more and more time on your phone or laptop and therefore cooped up indoors. A lot of people find spending time in nature is a really important part of their self care routine. Some of them say it helps them to be mindful and appreciate life, others say it helps them see the bigger picture outside of their own head and thoughts and some simply find the fresh air helps them relax. It can include things like going for walks, spending time at your local park or beach, growing plants and much more.

Art

Many people find that spending time on artistic activities, such as drawing and painting, can be soothing. Repeatedly moving a pencil or paint over paper can itself be a calming act, and sometimes being creative is an opportunity to express difficult thoughts and emotions that can't otherwise be put into words, gaining more insights on what you've been through or are going through.

Some have said that art helps them to focus on the present moment, helping them focus on how they're feeling and experience connections between their emotions and body. While this can be overwhelming, it is a step towards better self-awareness and may help with knowing what solutions or actions to take.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness can help us enjoy life more and pay better attention to the world around us, especially how we interact with it through our bodies. Mindfulness techniques and meditations are designed to awaken us to the sensations of the present moment, such as the sound of the birds or the feel of an object. The goal is that we are not caught up in the constant workings of our thoughts and have more time to see the present moment clearly.

APPS

Kooth

www.kooth.com

Your online mental wellbeing community

Free, safe and anonymous support

Stress Heads

www.themix.org.uk/apps-and-tools/stressheads

Being stressed out sucks because stress turns your brain to goo, stopping you making decisions and piling up until it feels like your head's going to explode (*pop*).

But what if you could turn your screen into a stress-relief tool? Simply hatch a Stresshead relax as you chase your very own pet peeve around until you catch it and smash it. And while you're doing that, you can get great advice – helping you deal with all kinds of life stress, from exam pressure to money problems.

Mood Panda

www.moodpanda.com

Simple happiness rating - update your mood as often as you wish and add a note giving a reason

Mood Scope

www.moodscope.com

Measure your mood every day by visiting the website and logging in with your email address and password. We've found it's best to do this at the same time each day. The early morning, soon after you've woken up, works best as it seems to capture your mood before the events of the day have kicked in. These can have a tendency to change your mood (usually temporarily) either upwards or downwards. What you're really after is capturing your baseline mood at the same time every day.

SAM

www.Sam-app.org.uk

SAM will help you to understand what causes your anxiety, monitor your anxious thoughts and behaviour over time and manage your anxiety through self-help exercises and private reflection.

Child Bereavement

www.childbereavementuk.org/our-app

The app has been created by a group of bereaved young people working directly with Child Bereavement UK.

It has been developed for 11-25-year-olds who have been bereaved of someone important to them.

The app has information about Bereavement, Grief, Feelings, How others can help.

It includes a built-in notepad so you can write down how you are feeling and also links to Child Bereavement UK's website where you can use search facilities to find other support organisations near you.

Calm Harm

www.stem4.org.uk/calmharm

The urge to self-harm is like a wave.

It feels the most powerful when you start wanting to do it.

Learn to ride the wave with the free Calm Harm app using these activities:

Comfort, Distract, Express Yourself, Release, Random and Breathe.

When you ride the wave, the urge to self-harm will fade.

Mindful Gnats

<https://appgrooves.com/app/mindful-gnats-by-handaxe-limited>

Mindful Gnats is an app designed to teach young people simple mindfulness and relaxation skills. It can be used to help mindfulness practice when playing the Mindful Gnats desktop game (see www.peskygnats.com for details) or as a stand alone aid to mindful practice. These skills can help to reduce stress, and improve awareness of your body, mind and world.

Chill Panda

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/chill-panda/>

Chill Panda is for children and adults who want to learn how to manage stress and worry and feel better.

Stay Alive

<https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay-alive-app/>

The Stay Alive app is a suicide prevention resource for the UK, packed full of useful information and tools to help you stay safe in crisis. You can use it if you are having thoughts of suicide or if you are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide.

Scout & Explorer Resource Pack:

Challenging Anxious Thoughts - In this exercise, we will practice catching our irrational thoughts, and replacing them with rational alternatives. With enough practice, this will become a natural process that can help you manage anxiety.

Coping Toolbox - Life is upside down right now. Helping your child to find ways to relax and cope is vital to help their mind and body switch off from their worries.

Coping with the Death of a Loved One – Information and strategies to support Young People to cope with death.

Dealing with Anger – Strategies and discussion topics to help Young People understand that it's okay to feel angry.

Dealing with Change - We can't change the current situation, but we can look for the good things about it to help ourselves feel better. And you can remind them that this won't last forever!

Emotional Check in - This written resource supports children and young people not only express their feelings but identify why they are feeling a particular way.

Feelings Diary – Track and monitor the way youngsters are feeling and what is causing each feeling.

Finding the Balance - When considering your mental health during this difficult time, it can be helpful to identify the elements that play a role in affecting it.

Pandemics & Coronavirus – Simple explanations about the Coronavirus

Relaxation Techniques - Using a variety of skills, you can end the fight-or-flight response before the symptoms become too extreme.

Self-Care Kit – Lots of activities to encourage children to see the best in any given situation.

Starting Again - Transitioning back to school after weeks in lockdown is likely to be challenging for many of us.

Staying Connected – Who are they missing? How could they keep in touch?

Stress Bucket – exploring ways to manage stress.

Survey – A survey aimed at teens and how they are feeling/coping during lockdown.

Ways to Feel Better – Strategies to help when children are feeling emotional.

Worry Jar – An opportunity to explore worries and concerns.

Transition Resources (Circles of Help, This Is Me) - Transition from primary to secondary school can be scary for children, especially if they have missed induction days due to the lockdown.

Information & Advice

Young people might feel as though they have been cheated of some of their experiences. They may be missing the last term at school or uni, exams, holidays or social summer events planned with friends. They may be missing their friends and when you are young, these experiences loom very large in your world.

Teenagers live in a world where school and exams are valued very highly. The decision to cancel A-level and GCSE exams may therefore create a lot of anxiety. Make sure you talk to them about it and encourage them to continue learning

Accept that they will also need to talk with friends and process what is happening around them, so tune into the value of the technology they are glued to, and actively encourage face time and group chats. It is best to talk with teenagers as the near-adults they are, emphasising the positives

Find a way of letting them know that you are aware of their distress, and that you want to help. The aim is to ensure that they do not shut down and stay open to talk to you. Try to use terms such as: *"My heart goes out to you"*, *"I feel for you and am here for you"*. *I can see this is very hard for you" or "I want to help, if you feel able to let me"*.

Let them know that whatever they say, you will not be shocked, angry or frightened by their thoughts and feelings. One of the fears that young people may struggle with is the idea that their problems will have a terrible effect on you. Find a way of letting them know that, however shameful or frightening their thoughts, you are strong enough to cope and will be there for them.

Another important message is to show them that you are there for them. They need to know that you care for them, and that no matter what happens, you will do your very utmost to help. Teens need to know that you will stick with them, and you will not reject them because of the way they are feeling.

Research has shown that, for some, social networking can provide support and reassurance. It may be a great platform to help them reach out and talk to others during this period of isolation.

Even if they recognise that it is no one's fault, angry feelings can be overwhelming for teens. It can feel extremely unfair for this to have happened to them and their friends. It may be easier for adults to see the bigger picture. Adults can recognise that this will be over at some time in the future. For young people, however, this will seem like the whole of their life that has been taken away from them.



Take action to help other people by sharing three things you're doing to stay positive during the coronavirus crisis with three others

So many people want to help others during the coronavirus crisis, including young people. We wanted to know what our young people thought was the most important thing for them to take action on, so we did the easiest thing – we asked them.

At the top of their list was 'peer support'. They told us that young people's mental wellbeing is going to be disproportionately affected by the current coronavirus crisis, and yet it's not being widely talked about.

That's why, we're asking young people to share Three for 3. Write (or draw) three things you're doing to look after your mental wellbeing during this challenging time and share these ideas with three other people.

Once you've shared your three things, the people you've shared with should share their own three things with you and three others, keeping the conversation about wellbeing going. You can do this with your family, friends, or if you're over 13 and have social media, by tagging people on social media using #Threefor3.

By taking action you'll be helping other people find out new ways to support their wellbeing.

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/scouts-at-home/scouts-helping-others/mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

Sources of more information

<https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/>

https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3708/coronavirus-report_march2020.pdf

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/c/children-and-young-people>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

<https://www.rethink.org/news-and-stories/blogs/2020/03/managing-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/coping-coronavirus-guide-young-people>

<https://www.annafreud.org/coronavirus-support/>

<https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus-update>