

HELP FOR

CORONAVIRUS



LOW MOOD


UNCERTAIN TIMES



INTRODUCTION

Managing uncertainty can be difficult at the best of times for everyone, especially if you were having a difficult time before. 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.



**IT'S NORMAL
TO FEEL SAD,
STRESSED,
CONFUSED,
SCARED OR ANGRY
DURING A CRISIS.**

Talking to people you trust
can help, such as friends
and family or your fellow
community members.

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 lots of different symptoms but the main ones are:

- a fever
- a cough

WHAT?



HOW TO STOP IT?

The best way to stop coronavirus spreading is to wash your hands 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 who we live with and should stay 2 metres 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.

IS IT?



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 lots 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 people are getting really ill or dying of the disease it is important to remember that most people have mild symptoms like the flu.

FACTS



RESOURCES

Young Minds - info on
Coronavirus

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

Mind - Looking after your mental
wellbeing

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/looking-after-your-wellbeing/#collapse7546>

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/coronavirus/how-teenagers-can-protect-their-mental-health-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

YoungScot - Looking after your
wellbeing in a Coronavirus
outbreak

<https://young.scot/get-informed/national/how-to-look-after-your-mental-wellbeing>

RESOURCES

TIC+

<https://www.ticplus.org.uk/>

*Gloucestershire Healthy Living
and Learning*

<https://www.ghll.org.uk/>

On Your Mind Gloucestershire

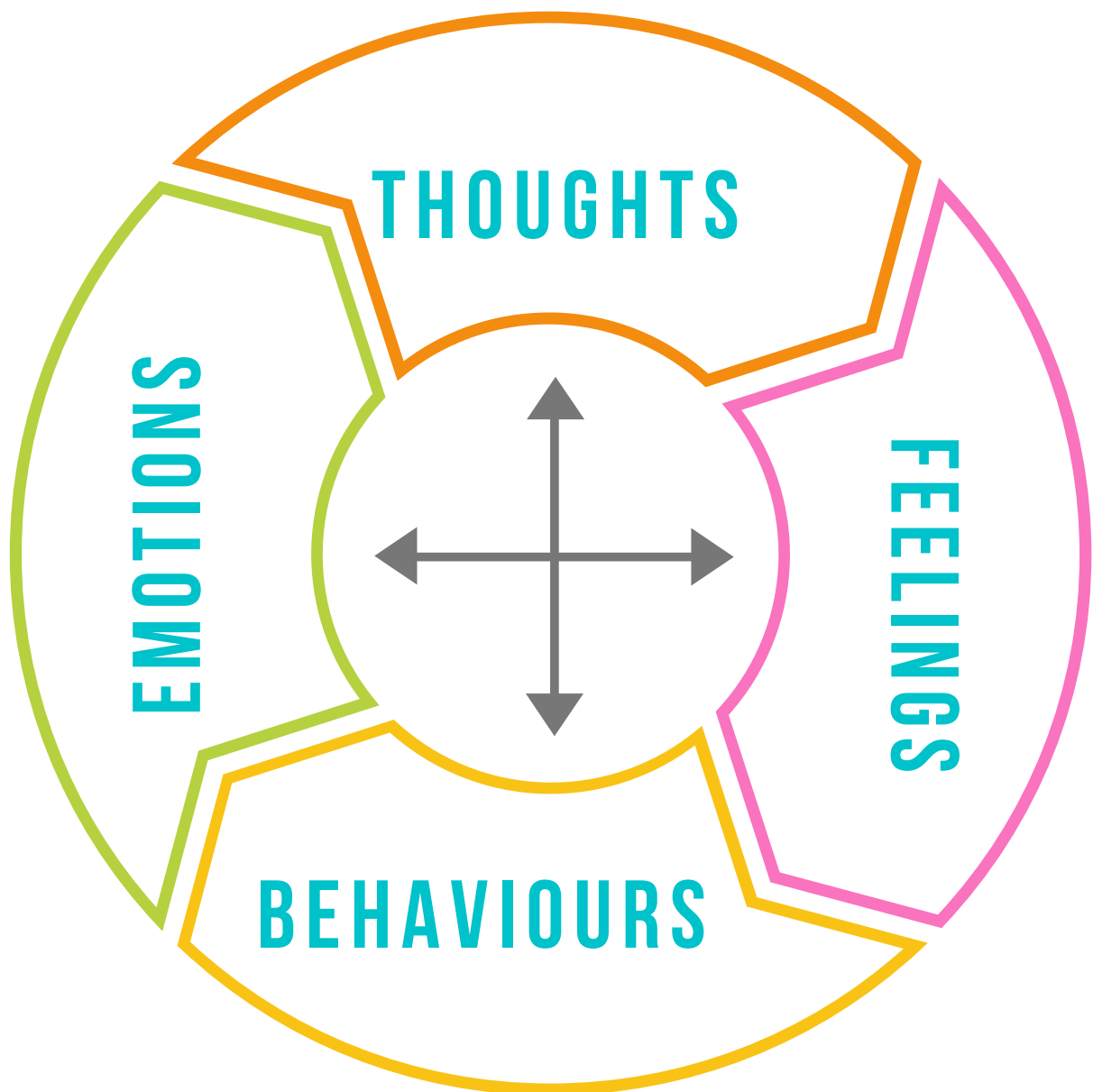
<https://www.onyourmindglos.nhs.uk/>



FEELINGS

HOW THEY ALL LINK TOGETHER

When we are feeling low 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 gives us more time to think negative thoughts. This can make our bodies feel strange, maybe tired, achy or tense and this in turn makes us feel more sad.



TOP TIPS

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR MOOD

1

Look out for each other, this might be your family, your friends or your local community. Stay in touch with people via skype, offer to help people who are vulnerable, help your parents (this is a tough time for them too).

2

Maintain a routine, make sure you get enough regular sleep, get everything you need to do done and have time to enjoy yourself.

There are examples online:

<https://alexandrialivingmagazine.com/news/how-to-homeschool-your-children-during-coronavirus/>

3

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

4

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.

SOCIALISING

STAYING SOCIAL WHILST IN LOCKDOWN

Our social networks directly link to our mood and being in lockdown we can feel lonely especially when we are feeling low. Therefore it is important that we stay in touch with those who are important to us. Fortunately we live in a world where technology make it easier for us. On top of your usual online socialising why not try these ways to stay in touch.



- 1 HOUSEPARTY APP or FACEBOOK MESSENGER- These video call platform allows you to video call multiple friends and play games together.
- 2 Join a virtual quiz night and make a team with your friends, or why not host your own.
- 3 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 taskmaster night. Look up #hometasking for ideas.
- 4 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.

SCHOOL

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 the next. It might seem easier to just avoid doing your work all together. 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-

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.

EXERCISE



STAYING ACTIVE

Exercise has a huge impact on wellbeing not only physical but mental wellbeing too. It is important to stay active, as this can improve our mood, even though we may have to change the way we do this to stick to the rules. 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 have 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 Wicks' 9am PE classes.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>



ACTIVITY

It can be very easy when we are feeling low to want to stay in bed all day and not do anything, even more so now that we are being told to stay at home. Not doing things means that we do not get the positive feedback from completing a task, which actually makes us feel worse. So it is important to keep doing things including things you have to do (that there is a consequence for not doing, like school work!), the things you should do regularly (like showering and cleaning teeth) and the things that you enjoy.

To help you do this you can use these work sheets, use an app like mood tools or get creative and make your own, bullet journalling can be a great way to do this. Try to schedule at least one activity from each category every day.



ACTIVITY SHEET 1

THINGS I HAVE TO DO

THINGS I DO REGULARLY

THINGS I ENJOY DOING

ACTIVITY SHEET 2

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

ACTIVITY SHEET 2

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

ACTIVITY SHEET 2

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

THOUGHT

CHALLENGING

Our thoughts impact the way that we feel and when we are feeling low our brains tend to pick up on the bad things 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 used because you are feeling low. 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.

1

Think about what you would tell a friend if they were thinking this thought.

2

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?

3

Do you believe this thought 100%? If not what makes up the other percent?

4

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. "I feel anxious so the party must be going to be bad").



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

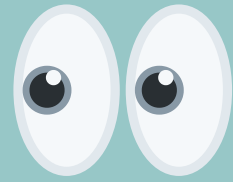


Discounting/disqualifying (e.g. "That doesn't count.", "That was just lucky - it would never happen again".)



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 time 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 surprised! Testing evidence is an important stage before we take the thought to court.



Reconsidering our thoughts

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."



Trying something new

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

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

TYPE OF GNAT

THOUGHT CHALLENGING SHEET 1

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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

TYPE OF GNAT

THOUGHT CHALLENGING SHEET 2

THOUGHT I WANT TO CHALLENGE

**EVIDENCE THAT AGREES
WITH THE THOUGHT**

**EVIDENCE THAT
DISAGREES WITH THE
THOUGHT**

THOUGHT CHALLENGING SHEET 2

THOUGHT I WANT TO CHALLENGE

**EVIDENCE THAT AGREES
WITH THE THOUGHT**

**EVIDENCE THAT
DISAGREES WITH THE
THOUGHT**

THOUGHT CHALLENGING SHEET 2

THOUGHT I WANT TO CHALLENGE

**EVIDENCE THAT AGREES
WITH THE THOUGHT**

**EVIDENCE THAT
DISAGREES WITH THE
THOUGHT**

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

