

Looking after your wellbeing during uncertain times



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by Bow
Centre**

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What is wellbeing?



The **Mental Health Foundation** say on their website that:

“Wellbeing is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy”.

However, it is important to realise that wellbeing is a much broader concept than moment-to-moment happiness.

While it does includes happiness, it also includes other things, such as how satisfied people are with their life a whole, their sense of purpose, and how in control they feel”.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/blog/what-wellbeing-how-can-we-measure-it-and-how-can-we-support-people-improve-it>



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Looking after our wellbeing during uncertain times

Lots of different things impact on our wellbeing.



Things happening in our lives and our environment, changes to work, relationships and finances can also impact on how we feel.

Our health, both physical and mental, can also impact on our wellbeing.



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What helps boost our wellbeing?

A lot of people and organisations have looked into what helps improve our mental health.

We will look at some of the things that are thought to be helpful, particularly during times of change.

These include:

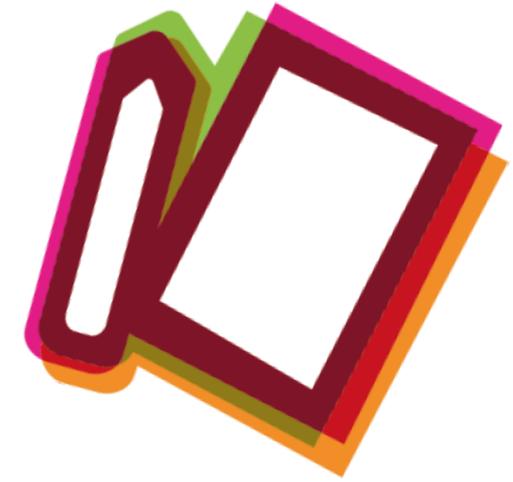
Routine & structure, setting goals and having purpose, supporting others, having fun & getting creative, learning, checking in with your thoughts and feelings, being mindful and learning to relax.





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Developing routine and structure



Creating a routine and structure into our days and weeks can help us to feel organised, grounded and a bit more in control.

You might want to break your day up into chunks to make sure you incorporate time for fun and pleasure, time for learning and self-development, time for connecting with others and time to get all your household chores done.

Maybe it's just about getting up at a set time of day and sticking to it.



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Stay connected



If you are working from home, have a reduced circle of friends, if you live alone or are self-isolating because of COVID-19 stay connected with others to prevent yourself feeling cut off or detached.

Telephone, message and video-call friends, family and colleagues.

You may want to get creative and set up activities to do at the same time as friends like virtual film nights or yoga sessions, chatting afterwards to share views.





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Setting goals and having a sense of purpose



Sometimes it can feel good to set ourselves a goal to help gives us a sense of purpose and a sense of achievement if we reach it.

This could be anything, big or small.

This could be about learning a new skill, personal fitness, organising things in your home or anything else that you would gain a sense of accomplishment and achievement from.

We heard recently about the man who ran a marathon in his back garden, think outside the box and come up with some ideas of things you can work towards.



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Supporting others & giving back



Helping others has been proven to boost our own wellbeing.

There are lots of volunteering opportunities you could engage in to help you retain a sense of purpose and community.

You could contact your local volunteer service or help out more locally, supporting neighbours and community groups.

You might know of smaller charities near to where you live that are looking for people to help out and make calls to clients for example. This will help you to keep using the amazing skills you have and it's likely to be really rewarding too.



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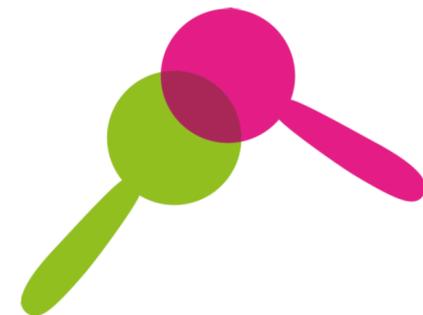
Having fun and being creative



As well as achieving goals and supporting others, let yourself have some fun and enjoyment too!

This is a strange time and many of us are feeling stressed and worried about the future. Make sure you do have some time off from thinking about wider global and political issues, from 'corona-talk' and the news and do something for the sheer pleasure and fun of it.

Make something, create something and play games.





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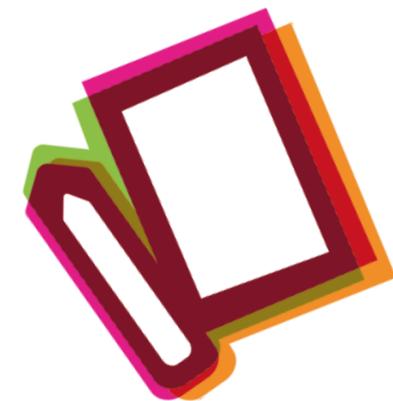
Learning new skills and expand your knowledge

Learning something new, whether its expanding your knowledge or developing a new skill can help give you a boost of confidence and wellbeing.

There are lots of online opportunities at the moment.

Check our your local library and community centres.

Open University offer lots of free learning options <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/>





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The basics: sleep, food and drink

When we are stressed or worried we can easily forget the simplest things like eating nourishing food, drinking enough water and getting enough sleep.

This may sound boring, but it's helpful to try and avoid unhelpful coping strategies like drinking and smoking more than usual or turning to the comfort food a little too often.



Whilst these things can give a quick fix, they all have a significant impact on our brains and emotions.

Sleep is also important for our immunity so treat yourself to a little more than usual.



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Become more aware of your thoughts and feelings



If you do feel stressed or anxious stop and notice these feelings and let them be there.

This might sound strange as we naturally want to get rid of uncomfortable feelings, but sometimes when we try and fight how we feel we actually create extra tension.

Try saying to yourself “I notice I’m feeling stressed out”.

As soon as you say this you create a slight separation between your feelings and the part of you that is observing them. It can help to lessen panicky or unpleasant feelings.

Notice the voice in your head, how do you talk to yourself? What is your thinking style?

Do you find yourself thinking negative thoughts? Maybe you can challenge them and look for more positive alternatives.



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Mindfulness, breathing and relaxation



If we are feeling a bit stressed and we want to feel a bit calmer, we can try things like mindfulness, breathing exercises and relaxation exercises.

There is a lot of information online if you look on Google or YouTube you will find plenty of resources.

Some people like to meditate, so just focus on their breathing.

A very simple technique is to sit comfortably, breathe in for 4 seconds...hold for 2 seconds...breathe out for 6 seconds.....

Repeat this several times and do it whenever you remember to. It will help calm your nervous system and relax your body.



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Thank you



Check out www.bbhc.org.uk for any courses, projects, activities or
volunteering you can get involved in