

Wellbeing during Covid-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed a huge strain on each of us, whether we have personally had the virus or not. In this time of significant uncertainty, it's important to understand what we can do to support our wellbeing.

This guide looks at why the pandemic is affecting our mental health and wellbeing, what we can do to support our wellbeing from home, and how to tackle particular challenges.

How is the coronavirus pandemic affecting our wellbeing?

Why am I feeling so stressed and anxious?

Coronavirus COVID-19 is a new infection that has spread around the world in recent months. To prevent COVID-19 from spreading too quickly and too widely, governments have placed restrictions on what people can and cannot do. News about COVID-19 is constant, and the associated economic impacts and health effects of this virus are huge.

All these things can easily make us anxious and stressed. This is a natural response to crisis, when there are many unknown factors.

For some, the measures we are taking such as social distancing and self-isolation, along with travel restrictions, constant news alerts and financial stressors, may be overwhelming. **The negative impact on our wellbeing cannot be underestimated.**

How do I know if I'm stressed?

Though there are many factors at play in the ways we individually respond to the ongoing pandemic, we may all struggle from time to time as we experience the impact of coronavirus on our lives.

You might be experiencing:

- fear and worry about lack of connection and interaction with others and the impact this may have on mental health and wellbeing
- feelings of loneliness and isolation
- fear for your personal health and safety or anxiousness about your family or loved ones
- feelings of helplessness and hopelessness

- loss of power and control – ‘I didn’t choose this’
- lack of certainty – ‘How long will this situation last?’ ‘When will we return to normal life?’

In fact, stress can affect us in many ways, sometimes in ways we don’t notice. You might be experiencing:

- **Cognitive Symptoms** – such as reduced concentration, efficiency, and productivity, poor judgement, ‘brain fog’, indecision and self-doubt.
- **Emotional symptoms** – such as sadness, irritability and anger, cynicism, and frustration
- **Physical Symptoms** – such as a racing heart rate, tension headaches, jaw clenching, muscle spasms, frequent colds, indigestion, stomach aches, or diarrhoea
- **Behavioural symptoms** – such as increased use of alcohol or tobacco, withdrawal from others, disrupted sleep patterns, loss of sense of humour, or interpersonal problems like frequent arguments with family members.

If you have been noticing any of these symptoms, it’s possible that you may be experiencing a normal stress response to the coronavirus crisis.

Understanding stress

Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from adverse circumstances. **Stress is a normal part of life and is a natural response** to an external pressure that disrupts your equilibrium. Stress can cause symptoms in several areas of the body and mind.

This is a tense time and most people will feel stressed at some point, whether it’s about losing a job, getting, protecting loved ones or managing the current general uncertainty in life. **It’s ok to feel worried and anxious – these feelings will pass.** The action you do next is what matters.

Tackling stress

Once you acknowledge your stress, identifying the cause or stressor will help you tackle the problem at hand. If used as a signal, your stress can motivate you to control what you can to help reduce your symptoms.

While there is no magic wand to make all of this go away, there are some protective steps we can take that will help us tackle stress and positively build our wellbeing as we continue to adjust to new and changing circumstances.

See our full guide on how to manage stress and anxiety for more information about this.

Improving your wellbeing

Building up our wellbeing is an important long-term strategy in stress management. If you have good mental wellbeing you can cope better with the inevitable stresses of life, and particularly the current crisis. Other benefits include:

- feeling relatively confident in yourself and have positive self-esteem
- being able to feel and express a range of emotions
- being able to build and maintain good relationships with others
- feeling more engaged with the world around you
- living and working productively

For more information on how to improve your wellbeing while stuck at home, read on for the **Five ways to wellbeing from Home**.

<https://guideposts.org.uk/wellbeing/covid-19/coronavirus-and-wellbeing/>

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