

## Managing Anxiety Around Corona Virus



### Useful Websites:

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

[www.healthyoungmindsinherts.org.uk](http://www.healthyoungmindsinherts.org.uk)

[www.who.int](http://www.who.int) (World Health Organisation)

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-England](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-England)

### How do I cope with anxiety?

Remember panic is contagious too...

#### *7 Tips on How to Cope*

1. *Challenge Your Thoughts* - avoid catastrophising, fake news and guess work. The media does not always present solid facts and will sensationalise. Just because it is on TV it does not make it true.
2. *Step Back from the News* - limit yourself to how much you watch, our brains are only wired to take in so much information before we start to feel overwhelmed.
3. *Gain perspective* - for quality information and reassurance visit the World Health Organisation and/or Public Health England websites.
4. *Practise self-care* - spend 30 minutes outside each day, spend some time talking to someone who makes you laugh, establish simple routines.
5. *If you feel overwhelmed speak to someone* - keep in touch with your support networks but try not to feed off each other's anxieties. Journal or write down your worries. If you feel desperate you can call the Samaritans on 116 123. This is a 24/7 service and does not show up on your phone bill.

6. *Focus on what you can control* - make an action plan if it helps reduce your anxiety, know that you are part of a community and there are people who will help you, remember hand washing is still a simple task that can make a real impact in reducing the spread of the virus.
7. *Break your day into chunks* - try and set up routines for self-care, spending time with your child/children, getting exercise, maintaining as much normality as possible.

### How do I help my child/ren cope with anxiety?

1. Talk to your child about their anxieties - show them you understand. Cuddle them - holding someone close can help them self-regulate and calm down.
2. Explain what anxiety is (see NHS website) and how it affects how we feel physically. Identify what those anxious feelings are.
3. Try and find solutions to their anxiety. Put a plan in place. Reassure them that you are prepared and that you and they are surrounded by a community who will help them.
4. Try mindful breathing exercises (Health Young Minds website or Headspace app which is free for 10 sessions which is all you need.)
5. Try not to show your own anxiety and limit their exposure to the news.
6. Turn an old tissue box into a 'Worry Box' for them to write down and post their anxieties. You could set aside a small amount of time each day to discuss them but then for the rest of the day encourage them to think about other things.
7. Distraction. Play games, watch funny or favourite films together, cook, paint, draw, play, be active, get creative...

### Keeping you and your child mental healthy: The Five Ways to Well-being.

1. **Be mindful**- this could be anything that helps you live in the present moment. *Get creative* - paint, draw, cook, garden, play 'keepy-uppies' with a football, use mindful colouring books, tell stories, never underestimate the power of a large cardboard box for younger children - is it a racing car, or a spaceship? ...

2. **Connect** with nature - garden, plant seeds, observe the signs of spring and discuss the seasons and weather changes...  
**Connect** with people we love - this does not have to be face to face if people are in isolation but we can phone, text and Skype, play with pets, laugh (watch comedy), play board games together, connect on-line (remember to monitor what your child is doing and remind them about on-line safety), have family film nights, charades...
3. **Be physically active** - play catch, kick a ball about, go for walks if possible, enjoy Wii Fit/Wii Dance if you have them, get them on the trampoline if you have one...
4. **Learn new skills** - take this time to teach your child a new skill such as cooking that you will both enjoy, play memory games (place items on a tray and give your child a minute to study the items, cover the tray with a tea towel and carefully remove an item, remove the tea towel and see if they can tell you what is missing) and card games (turning pairs of cards face down and muddle them up, take turns to turn two cards face up, if they are a matching pair you keep them, if they are not you turn them back over and someone else has a go, the winner is the person who finds the most pairs).
5. **Give to others** - teach your child about the need to help those who are more vulnerable such as the elderly, encourage your child to help around the house (I realise that this may not go down well with the children!!)