Minding Your Mental Health During the Coronavirus Outbreak

There is much discussion about the impact of Coronavirus. Of course this can be frightening and could affect our emotional wellbeing and mental health. Here are some tips to support and manage our wellbeing during this time.

We hope they are of help to you.

Use reliable sources to inform yourself rather than speculation

Speculation is likely to increase feelings of worry and anxiety. You will feel more in control if you know where to access good quality information about the virus.

You can get high quality and reliable information from here;

www.publichealth.hscni.net

www.health-ni.gov.uk

www.nhs.uk

http://intranet.belfasttrust.local/Pages/Home.aspx

www.belfasttrust.hscni.net

Follow hygiene advice

Wash your hands more than usual.

Spend 20 seconds washing your hands (sing happy birthday to yourself twice to make sure it takes 20 seconds. If is up to you whether you sing this out loud or to yourself!).

It is very important that you wash your hands at these key times;

- When you get home or into work
- When you blow your nose, sneeze or cough
- Before you eat or handle food

If there is nowhere to wash your hands then use hand sanitisers and then wash them at the next opportunity.

Use tissues when you sneeze and then dispose of then straight away. Remember Catch it, Bin it.

Acknowledge your distress

It is normal to feel vulnerable when we read news about coronavirus. This feeling may be heightened if you have a physical health condition that might make you more at risk to the effects of the virus. You might also feel more vulnerable if you have mental health difficulties, either in the past or the present. It is important to acknowledge such feelings in ourselves and others. We should try to help each other look after our physical and mental health. We should try to avoid habits that are unlikely to be helpful in the long term such as increasing smoking or drinking.

Try not to judge others

Try to avoid blaming or making assumptions about who is responsible for the spread of the disease. The Coronavirus can affect anyone.

Manage your exposure to the news and social media

Whilst it can be helpful to keep informed, try to find balance. Don't avoid the news altogether but if you find that it is causing you distress, then put a limit on your news intake.

Try to stay connected

The company of family and friends is important at times of stress. Try to keep in touch as much as possible.

It is also a good idea to stick to a daily routine.

Belfast Trust has lots of useful information on stress management in the Minding your Mood section on the [B Well Website](#) and also on the BWell app that you can download free to your phone.

Dealing with self-isolation if necessary

You may be asked to self-isolate if there is a likelihood that you have Coronavirus.

Self-isolation may be a scary prospect. However, you have more control over your thoughts and feelings than you maybe realise. You do not necessarily have to view it as a bad thing. Different sure, but not necessarily bad.

Self-isolation will mean a different pace of life for a period of time. It can provide you with the time to keep in touch with others in different ways that usual, perhaps through email, phone or social media. Modern technology helps us keep in touch and remain psychologically close with people who matter to us even if we can't be physically present.

During self-isolation, prioritise looking after yourself in ways that you mightn't have had time to do before. Try reading books or watching movies that you have been meaning to get round to. Maybe you could try a new low impact exercise if you feel fit enough or practice relaxation techniques. You could try to see self-isolation as an unusual experience which will pass but may have its benefits.