



A.D.V.I.C.E - Topic 3: Mental Health (COVID -19)

It is perfectly natural during the coronavirus outbreak for us to feel worried or anxious. Data shows that over 4 in 5 adults are worried about the effect that coronavirus (COVID-19) is having on their life right now, with more than half saying it has affected their wellbeing and nearly half reporting high levels of anxiety.

With many of us feeling worried, anxious or isolated during these challenging times, there are lots of things we can do to look after our mental wellbeing and help others to prevent these concerns from becoming more serious.

Helpful Tips – Talk

Talk about your worries, **it is normal** to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation.

If you are working away from home or working in a different environment, then share your feelings and worries with colleagues and management.

Maintain contact with friends and family via phone and video calls to share how you are feeling.

Most companies now have Mental Health First Aiders, you may already know them or you may need to find out who they are, they can offer support and guidance to get you either professional support or other appropriate support depending on how you are feeling.

Most companies have access to an Employee Assistance Programme which can offer advice and support on a variety of issues such as:

- Stress & Anxiety
- Financial information
- Family/relationship issues
- Alcohol or drug issues
- Gambling issues
- Legal information
- Access to counselling

Some Employee Assistance Programmes are also open for all the immediate family to use.

For those who do not have access to an Employee Assistance Programme there are Charities that provide the same service for you and your families if you work in the Construction Industry.

<https://www.lighthouseclub.org/>

Recently they have launched a new app to support Construction Worker's Mental Health. This free mental health app will provide vital information, advice and guidance on many wellbeing topics including stress, anxiety, depression, anger and suicidal thoughts.

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The 'Construction Industry Helpline' app is aimed at people who would like to find out more information about how they can perhaps help themselves or if necessary, take the next step in seeking professional help. It is a preventative tool and provides support at the initial stages of a situation so that the problem does not reach a life critical stage

<https://www.constructionindustryhelpline.com/our-app.html>

Construction
Industry Helpline
0345 605 1956

The Railway Benefit Fund is a Railway Industry charity that supports people, whether you are a current or former railway employee. They can help you through a variety of problems. Assistance is provided in many forms, on a short- or long-term basis and is specifically tailored to an individual's situation. They do not believe that what works for one person, will work for the next! The charity offers financial assistance, practical help and wide-ranging advice, all in the strictest of confidence.

<https://www.railwaybenefitfund.org.uk> Telephone: 0345 241 2885

Samaritans offers free support to all they are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

Telephone: 116 123 (all calls are free of charge) or by email on jo@samaritans.org.

You can also write to them, address below:

Chris
Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK
PO Box 9090
STIRLING FK8 2SA

Keep a routine and set goals

For those working at home keep a regular routine and set goals: you may need to set a new routine for now. Setting goals and achieving them gives a sense of control and purpose.

If you are working from home with children, it can be difficult to find balance and feel productive. Speak to your employer about flexibility and if it is possible to work different hours. But remember, it is important for you to not overstretch yourself and take care of your own mental wellbeing. Make sure you know about family friendly policies that can help spread the load.

Find a suitable place to work while being close to your children to supervise them. Having a set workspace helps all the family to know you are working. Take regular breaks to rest and relax. Whilst it is important to have routine and structure, be prepared to adapt and be flexible to suit your family needs.

One of the biggest challenges can be supervising children appropriately. Some older children can be left on their own but younger children and babies cannot. When your children need you, take time off and return to your tasks later. Give yourself permission to take care of your family and do not feel guilty for doing so.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/coronavirus-parents-working-from-home/>



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For those working away from home, set up a routine for when you are not working.

You could use the recommended exercise time to walk, run or cycle around the local area and surroundings (Remembering the 2-metre social distancing rule).

If you are in a physical job and do not want to do any further physical exercise, then there are numerous websites offering free training and access to further education. The Open University are offering over 1000 free courses across 8 different subject areas. The courses are available to start right away.

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses>

Why not research the area in which you are staying? Find out about the history or architecture in the area.

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/using-bho/local-guide>

Or simply taking time to relax indoors should give you some relief from anxious thoughts and feelings and can help boost your mood.

Eat Well

Eat well, use the time to prepare healthy and nutritional meals, your physical health impacts on your mental health. The NHS website offers advice on food and health, recipes and tips and digestive health.

If you are working away try to plan ahead to make healthy food choices.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/eight-tips-for-healthy-eating/>

Sleep Well

Maintaining good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how you feel mentally and physically too, so it is important to get enough. Every Mind Matters sleep page provides advice

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep/>

For those working away, think about where you are staying and whether taking simple home comforts with you, may help you sleep easier.

Maybe try taking your usual pillow and bedding, a framed photo of the most important people to you to have in the room or even your own 'mug'. Familiar smells and objects can make us feel less anxious.

Helpful Tips – Manage your media and information intake

If 24-hour news and constant social media updates are making you worried, try to limit the time you spend watching, reading or listening to coverage of the outbreak to once or twice a day. **Only get information from a credible source you can trust – such as GOV.UK or the NHS website – and fact-check information you get from newsfeeds, social media or other people.**

It is important to remember it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently.

Remember, this situation is temporary and, for most of us, these difficult feelings will pass.