



## Well-being and Mental Health

### Advice and ideas for keeping yourself and your family well during these unprecedented times

#### Tips for looking after mental health

##### **Think about access to media and social media**

Some people can be quite paralysed by this anxiety and may want to completely stop interacting with the news.

For others this can be quite difficult. They want to know what's going on. Not knowing makes it worse. Think about limiting how much time you spend on social media or reading, listening or watching the news if it is making you anxious.

##### **Do something you can control**

It can help to express this anxiety in a way that you can control. That could be writing down what you feel, or keeping a journal

##### **Let it go**

Once you've written it down, let it go. Be really aware of what you're thinking. Sometimes we are catastrophising; we're focusing on all these 'what ifs?' Bring things back to what you actually know.

##### **Wellbeing check**

Make sure you are looking after yourself, doing what you can to help get a good night's sleep, eating well and doing exercise. This can be a workout in the living room or hula hooping in the back garden!

##### **Socialise**

Make plans to video chat with people or groups you'd normally see in person. You can also arrange phone calls or send instant messages or texts. If you are worried that you might run out of stuff to talk about, make a plan with someone to watch a show or read a book separately so that you can discuss it when you contact each other.

## Breathing techniques and mindfulness

Mindfulness is really helpful in working to alleviate anxiety and worry.....

**Mindful eating:** This involves paying attention to the taste, sight and textures of what you eat. For example, when drinking a cup of tea or coffee you could focus on how hot and liquid it feels on your tongue, how sweet it tastes or watch the steam that it gives off.

**Mindful moving, walking or running:** Notice the feeling of your body moving. You might notice the breeze against your skin, the feeling of your feet or hands against different textures on the ground or nearby surfaces, and the different smells that are around you.

**Body scan:** This is where you move your attention slowly through different parts of the body, starting from the top of your head moving all the way down to the end of your toes. You could focus on feelings of warmth, tension, tingling or relaxation of different parts of your body.

**Mindful colouring and drawing:** Focus on the colours and the sensation of your pencil against the paper, rather than trying to draw something in particular. You could use a mindfulness colouring book or download mindfulness colouring images.

**Mindful meditation:** This involves sitting quietly and focusing on your breathing, your thoughts, sensations in your body and the things you can hear around you. Try to bring your focus back to the present if your mind starts to wander. Different things work for different people, so if you don't find one exercise useful, try another. You can also try adapting them so that they suit you and are easier to fit in with your daily life.

These are some apps that you can download to help with relaxation

- Headspace
- Calm
- Aura
- Stop, breathe and think
- Insight timer

All of these can be done with your children. Make mindfulness into an activity. Remember, this is an unknown. Anxiety and worry are as normal as normal can be in a situation like this, but we want to work together to support each other, ourselves and our families.



## **Contacts that might be useful for you, your friends or family**

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/community-hub/keeping-you-safe/family-wellbeing/>

This link has a wealth of links to other organisations and great ideas for how to talk to your children about Coronavirus in an age appropriate way.

### **Healthy Minds**

**01865 901600 or txt 07798 667169**

Healthy Minds is a NHS service offering quick and easy access to talking therapies, practical support and employment advice. Anyone who is feeling depressed, anxious or stressed, is aged 18 or over and has a GP in Buckinghamshire can request help from Healthy Minds.

### **Citizen Advice**

**01296 3283317**

A service with knowledge and information for many concerns and problems.

### **Family Action**

**0808 802 6666 or text 07537 404 282**

The FamilyLine service supports people who are dealing with family pressures in a new and innovative way by using a network of volunteers from across the country to support family members over the age of 18 through telephone calls, email, web chat and text message.

### **Family Lives (previously Parentline)**

**0808 800 2222**

Family Lives offers a confidential and free helpline service for families, providing emotional support, information, advice and guidance on any aspect of parenting and family life. The helpline service is open 9am-9pm, Monday to Friday and 10am-3pm Saturday and Sunday.

### **Gingerbread**

**Single Parent Helpline: 0808 802 0925**

Gingerbread is the leading national charity working to help lone parents and their children.

### **First Response**

**0845 4600001 or 01296 383962**

Referrals into social care if you are concerned for the safety or well-being of a child.

### **Social Care**

**01296 382249**

This number takes you direct into social care to speak to the duty social worker should you not be able to make contact with your own social worker.

### **Women's Aid**

**01296 437777**

Women's Aid offer support to women & children/young people experiencing domestic violence.