

# TIPS FOR LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19

**In these stressful and uncertain times, when the things which can significantly impact you are outside of your control, you need to make sure you look after your own mental health.**

- **Stay connected** – love it or hate it ‘Zoom’ has enabled many of us to stay in touch. However you do it, talking to others is essential to maintaining our mental health.
- **Find activities** that will help you focus your mind such as mindfulness meditation – if it is right for you (it’s not for everyone), prayer, reading a book, doing a jigsaw or re-organising your desk or kitchen.
- **Get some fresh air** – if you’re not self-isolating, go for a walk and clear your head. If you are self-isolating, open the windows and let some air in.
- **Exercise** – if you can’t get out for a walk, find an online home workout video.
- **Create a motivating ‘to do’ list** – books you haven’t had a chance to read, a movie you wanted to watch or a new recipe to try out.
- **Have a routine** – if you’re looking after other people, especially children, having a routine is essential. During lockdown and with the disruption to our daily lives that Covid-19 has brought, we’ve had to create new routines. Routine and structure helps most of us function and gives us a sense of ‘control’. Win small control victories by sticking to a time for getting up, time for working, time for dog walking, etc. Children and young people thrive on routine and continuity so having one works for all the generations.
- **Gratitude and Reflection** – we hear a lot these days about the benefit of keeping a gratitude journal. If you haven’t yet tried reflecting on what you can be grateful for, why not have a go? You can do this on a daily basis or on a Friday night with your family.
- **Solitude vs isolation** – some of us have experienced loneliness recently due to self-isolation or not being able to connect with people as we used to. We hope you can use some of these tips to maintain mental health to encourage you to try and reconnect in the new ways that the pandemic allows. But we all need to remember that solitude – being with ourselves rather than always with others can also benefit most people. Whether that’s a walk round the block, taking time to really notice the season or your local neighbourhood or writing a diary entry, doing some things alone can help us mentally refresh and repair before being with others again.