

COPING SKILLS

LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING DURING CORONAVIRUS

Limit COVID-19 airtime	<p>Allocate set times for checking accurate sources of information: https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/ Watching the National News once a day. Avoid Social media / open google searches on COVID 19 and Symptoms. Limit your own and loved ones time talking about COVID 19, and try and divert attention onto other topics or activities.</p>
Focus on what is gained rather than Lost	<p>Increased time in one place / at home might offer an opportunity to pursue those activities you've been meaning to get to. For instance, devoting yourself to quiet personal time / family time, home improvement projects (e.g., decluttering), creative endeavours, reading; starting a diary; sewing; baking; and light TV entertainment.</p>
Relax & Keep Calm	<p>It is normal to feel anxious and worried at this time. Take time to relax and manage your worries. Take a deep breath; spend time in a quiet room; listen to calming music; massage your hands or feet; take a bubble bath, make of list of the things you are thankful for; write down your thoughts and feelings.</p> <p>Bring your attention into present time. If you notice your mind running off into the future or past gently note where it went and bring it back to focus on what you are aware of in this moment, here and now. Focus your attention fully on the activity that you are doing.</p> <p>To turn off your body's fight /flight responses that may be extra sensitive at this time, practice your breathing exercises regularly throughout the day (e.g., a few rounds of breathing in through the nose and out for longer through pursed lips).</p> <p>Now might be the time to develop your mindfulness practices. Websites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://centerformsc.org/practice-msc/guided-meditations-and-exercises/ has PDFs and audios, that go into mindful self compassion practice on a more in depth basis but are not parent specific. ● https://mindfulness-solution.com/DownloadMeditations.html ● http://www.just-a-minute.org/resource_centre/ 50 + meditations just a minute long. <p>I-phone / IPAD apps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Headspace (has a beginner level that is free) ○ Insight Timer has 10,146 free meditations <p>To overcome the brains natural negativity bias at such anxious times practice counteracting this with gratitude exercises: taking moments throughout the day to really savour and appreciate simple experiences arising from activities such as those above. When going to sleep at night bring one of those key moments to mind, which will promote more restful sleep.</p> <p>Time in nature is renowned for its healing and mood elevating components. Even if you do not have an outdoor space, open the windows, take in the fresh air and listen to the sounds, and tend to a plant.</p>
Change 'what ifs' to What Then'	<p>If you catch yourself in a spiral of 'What ifs' take the most pressing one or two of these and brainstorm a plan using information from accurate sources of information and guidelines.</p>

	<p>Focus on what you can do to keep yourself safe –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WASH your hands well and often • COVER your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve for coughs and sneezes • AVOID touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands • CLEAN and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces <p>SOCIAL DISTANCING by keeping at least 2 meters or more away from other people</p>
Structure	Structure your time - break the day up into periods of time i.e. morning time, afternoon, evening time & night time. What can I do during each period?
Routine	Keep routines as much as possible. Get a good night's sleep, go to bed and get out of bed at regular times; eat at regular times, drink water & look after your personal care.
Exercise	Establish regular exercise into your day but also movement at least every half hour. We can still go for walks outside while maintaining the 2 metres distance from others. There are online exercise resources, e.g., GLO Yoga, Pilates, and Meditation. They offer free trials on their website or with their app.
Beware of Negative Ways of Coping	Non-prescription drugs or alcohol are harmful and not helpful; Beware of smoking excessively – could this be an opportunity to reduce smoking or even quit smoking? Don't sleep all day or eat unhealthy food – this will lower your immune system. Don't isolate yourself from others – pick up the telephone.
Patience & Kindness	Be patient and kind with yourself and other people. This is new to everyone and is a difficult time for everyone as we all learn to adjust. Perhaps there are ways we can help others while still maintaining the safety measure outlined above.
Support	<p>Access your supports and keep connected by telephone - talk to family, friends, and your mental health key worker. They are available by telephone to help you problem solve and look for solutions to the challenges that you are facing.</p> <p>There are a list of online / telephone counselling and support services at the following link:</p> <p>https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/connecting-for-life/news/supports-and-services-during-covid-19.html</p>
Hope	<p>Remember you are not alone and remind yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can get through this • I can take it one hour at a time • This will pass
Be Safe, Be Well	