

INTRODUCTION

Social distancing is a drastic but necessary action at the moment. However, whilst it is designed to protect our physical health, we need to ensure it doesn't negatively affect our mental health

The team at **Every Mind Matters** have pulled together ten practical ways to help us look after our mental health, these are listed below for more details, [click here](#).

- Stick to the facts
- Connect with people
- Talk about your worries
- Support and help others
- Make a plan
- Look after your body
- Stay on top of difficult feelings
- Do things you enjoy
- Focus on the present
- Look after your sleep



FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

The Five Ways to Wellbeing are things we can do each day which are good for our overall wellbeing. This leaflet explains what the 'five ways' are and some practical suggestions about how we can achieve them within the current restrictions.

CONNECT

The first of the Five Ways is **Connect**. It's based on the belief that people need people and that positive relationships are important to our wellbeing.

Whilst social distancing is currently recommended to protect our physical health, it is more important than ever that we find other ways to stay socially connected. Digital technology can make this easier, including the following free, digital social platforms¹:

- **FaceTime/Zoom Basic** – live streaming
- **Houseparty**
- **Skype/WhatsApp/Google Duo** video and voice calls
- LiveStream
- **Watch2gether**
- **Strava** – share your daily exercises with friends
- Podcasts

Aside from using digital solutions, there are other things we can do to feel connected such as putting pictures up of the people we care about, listening to the radio or simply picking up the phone.



LEARNING

The second of our 5 Ways to Wellbeing is **Learning**. Research has shown that being inquisitive and learning something new can improve your wellbeing and provide a sense of achievement.

Learning doesn't have to mean formal qualifications. Over the coming months we are all likely to have more time than we usually would have. Why not start that online course you always talked about or pick up that guitar that you bought all those years ago.

Suggestions below of **FREE** things to do

- **FutureLearn** and **OpenLearn** have online courses.
- Libraries West offer **E-book**, **E-audio book** & **E-magazine** download services which you can access for free with your library membership card.
- Fancy learning a language? **Duolingo** offers personalised fun ways to learn over 30 languages.
- Listen to a **TEDtalk**. There are over 3000 on their website on a range of subjects.
- Weston Museum has developed a suite of resources to help bring the museum into your home, visit www.westonmuseum.org/digital-museum/ for more details.
- Why not distract yourself with a game or a puzzle? If you haven't got any at home Mind have signposted to online ones **here**.



BE ACTIVE

Being **Active** is the third of 5 Ways to Wellbeing, which can help us both physically and mentally. For example, improving mood, confidence, sleeping habits and concentration, whilst also reducing stress and depression. Have a look at the **Mind video on getting active**.

Suggestions below of **FREE** things to do

- Sport England has launched a new campaign **StayInWorkOut**. It aims to inspire people to stay active during the Coronavirus outbreak by sharing fun and creative ideas on how to get active at home, with exclusive offers and workouts. For more details visit their **website**.
- **NHS home workout** videos from the NHS, which include strengthening and 10-minute cardio workouts.
- **YouTube** has a range of popular workout and exercise classes you can access.
- For more personalised support, contact the **North Somerset Health Trainer Service** (*telephone support only currently*).



Being active doesn't have to be a formal sport it can be something as simple as using a basket instead of a trolley when shopping or cleaning more vigorously. If you're mindful of the little things you can do to turn each of your daily tasks into a mini workout, you'll be surprised how much better you'll feel!

TAKE NOTICE

The fourth of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing is **Take Notice**. The Coronavirus outbreak may cause you to feel anxious or stressed and so focusing on the current situation may seem counter-productive. But it's important to remember it is okay to feel this way and important to acknowledge these feelings. Remember, this situation is temporary and, for most of us, these difficult feelings will pass.

Suggestions below of **FREE** things to do

- Simple grounding techniques like **5-4-3-2-1** can be very helpful during periods of anxiety, helping to ground you in the present when your mind is bouncing around.
- On-line NHS approved self-help apps, click **here** for details.
- Other popular apps include **www.headspace.com** and **www.calm.com** which at the time of printing were offering free access to some of their meditations.
- THE MARCH Network have set up a site for free streaming of culture, arts and crafts click **here** for details.
- Several zoos across the UK have live webcam feeds into their animal enclosures including Chester Zoo, Edinburgh Zoo and Cotswold Wildlife Park.





Our final of the Five Ways to Wellbeing is **Give**. Research suggests that acts of kindness can help improve our wellbeing by improving feelings of self-worth and helping you to connect with others.

It could be small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones like volunteering in your local community. Below are some suggestions:

- **Look out for your neighbours** - The simplest thing we can do now is to look out for our neighbours and offer help with shopping and other essential activities if needed. Local mutual aid groups are evolving. Click [here](#) for a list in North Somerset.
- **Volunteer with organisations providing support** - Voluntary Action North Somerset is co-ordinating volunteering opportunities during the Coronavirus outbreak see [website](#) for details.
- **Other ways to help charities** – Many charities are going to be stretched. For example: fundraising events that would have taken place have been cancelled and volunteers may not be able to provide support. Think about the causes you care about and see what charities there are locally that you could help.



NEED FURTHER HELP

If you feel like you need a little more support, below are some helpful contacts:

- **Elefriends** at Mind www.elefriends.org.uk
- **Kooth** for children and young people at www.kooth.com
- **Samaritans** offer a 24-hour helpline service:
www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan
- **Silver Line** is a national, free and confidential helpline dedicated to older people (24/7). They offer information, friendship and advice – or just someone to chat to: **0800 4708090**.
- **SHOUT** operate a text/SMS based service for people who are in a crisis, anxious, worried or stressed. Text: **85258** or visit www.giveusashout.org
- **YOUNG MINDS:** If you have any parenting concerns or difficulties youngminds provides a helpline for parents [click here](#) or call **0808 802 5544**.

For a list of local services please go to **North Somerset Online Directory** and the **Independent Mental Health Network**.

