

Coronavirus and mental wellbeing for young people and students

This brief guide has been produced to support young people and students aged between 11 and 25 with their mental wellbeing during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Following the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) and connecting with others, being active, keeping learning, giving or supporting others and taking notice of your environment can make a big difference. [Our guidance](#) shows you how you can do this whilst following the latest Government guidelines. Also see [Mind Your Way](#) and [Start Now](#) for more ideas on this.

The COVID-19 outbreak may cause you to feel anxious, stressed, worried, sad, helpless, overwhelmed, confused or angry. It's important to remember it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently to different events.

There are some simple things you can do to help you take care of your mental health and wellbeing during times of uncertainty – and doing so will help you think clearly and make sure you are able to look after yourself and those you care about. The advice below comes from [Young Minds](#).

Talk to someone about how you're feeling

Whilst it is normal to feel worried, if you are starting to feel overwhelmed, it's important to acknowledge your feelings and speak to someone you trust, whether that's a friend, a family member or a helpline. See the signposting section at the bottom of this guide.

Arm yourself with the facts

There is a lot of information about the virus out there and false reports can fuel anxiety. Stay on top of what's happening by using the [Government website](#), it is the most up-to-date and reliable source of information. The [NHS common questions](#) about the virus can also be useful if you are worried about symptoms or family members. It can be very hard to know whether or not social media posts are true, so try not to rely on updates from there – reliable reporting can be found on [BBC Newsround](#).



Don't overexpose yourself to the news

If you do want to read or watch the news, try to limit the amount of time you spend and stick to regular intervals in the days. Take a break from social media if you feel like the updates are getting too much. Remember you are in control of what you see on your feed, take breaks when you do feel like things are getting too much or mute and unfollow accounts that make you feel more worried.

Stick to your normal routine

With so much uncertainty in the news, sticking to your routine can really help maintain a sense of normality. You might want to add extra activities into your day that make you feel calm but try to keep to your daily schedule as much as possible.

Find things that help you feel calm

Like at any other time, it's important that you are not only looking after your physical health, but your mental health too. Think about some activities that can help when you are feeling overwhelmed, like breathing techniques, writing down how you feel, playing music or talking to a friend. For some ideas, have a look at how you can make a [self-soothe box](#), or these [coping techniques](#).

Dealing with self-isolation

Self-isolation means staying away from other people to prevent the potential spread of illness. If you find you have been advised to self-isolate, the government have guidelines on their website on how to do this. Wherever you might be when you self-isolate, think about who you can keep in contact with and how you can use apps to talk to someone face to face in order to stay connected.

If you are on any medication, please continue taking it unless advised otherwise by your doctor. If you are worried about getting your prescription, call the pharmacy where you collect your medication, or your GP.

You may find that you need extra support, so think about who you can turn to. It could be someone you know, or a helpline that can talk to you about how you might be feeling.

Safety Planning

A safety plan is for someone to use when they are feeling that their mental health and wellbeing is low, and/or that they are at risk of self-harm or acting on suicidal thoughts – a plan to remind themselves of reasons to live, family and friends they can talk with and things that can make them feel strong.

By having a safety plan, you're making sure that there are strategies you can use to keep yourself safe, which can help you feel more in control when everything feels out of control. Think of your safety plan as your 'mental health first-aid kit'; it includes different things that will help you through a crisis.

Everyone's plan is personal and different, but it can help by walking someone through their steps to keep them safe. For people who self-harm or feel suicidal it's not designed to be their only support, but can help as part of a wider approach to supporting their wellbeing.

More information about safety plans, signposting to further sources of support, and access to free online suicide prevention and mental wellbeing training can be found on the [Cornwall Council website](#).

Guidance for Students

The Office for Students (OfS) is working with the Department for Education and with universities and colleges to ensure students have the information and guidance they need during this fast-developing situation - www.officeforstudents.org.uk/coronavirus

Information about your studies

Your university or college is the best place to go for information about your course, accommodation and access to facilities. Many of these services are provided remotely so you are encouraged to make use of their support services at this time. Your students' union, guild or association (if your university has one) would also be a good place to seek advice and support.

Sources of support - local and national

Together For Families

Together for Families provides support for parents and carers as well as young people. As well as providing useful contacts and forums to connect with, [their web page](#) is updated weekly to provide relevant content to help you with your children.

Your Way

Quality youth services in Cornwall for and with young people aged 10 and over. Offering support digitally during the Coronavirus outbreak, and includes a live chat option www.your-way.org.uk

Start Now Cornwall

Start Now is a partnership programme to develop resilience and mental well-being in young people. Information about the 5 Ways to Wellbeing, alongside how and where to access help for young people aged 10 – 16: www.startnowcornwall.org.uk

Headstart Kernow provide a range of sources of information and advice about supporting the emotional wellbeing of children and young people: www.headstartkernow.org.uk/sec-sch-support/covid-19

The Family Information Service provide information, advice and support that is available to families and professionals working alongside them. You can contact them on 0800 587 8191 or 01872 323 535; email: fis@cornwall.gov.uk www.supportincornwall.org.uk/kb5/cornwall/directory/home.page

NHS 24/7 helpline

To talk to someone about your mental wellbeing you can call the 24/7 NHS mental health telephone support, advice and triage help line - **0800 038 5300**. Support is available to anyone, regardless of age, all day every day. If you or someone you know feels they need to access urgent mental health support, they will listen to you and assess how best to help.

Kooth

Kooth provides free, safe and anonymous online counselling support and advice for 11-19 year olds in Cornwall: www.kooth.com

The Wave Project

Cornwall surf therapy charity who have produced some weekly activity books, full of games and ideas. New books online each week. Their wellbeing guide is full of practical tips and resources that may help you cope during isolation by staying positive and mentally well - www.waveproject.co.uk

Penhaligon's Friends

Cornwall children and young people's bereavement charity. All their helpers have had training to enable them to support you if are grieving the loss of someone you loved www.penthaligonsfriends.org.uk

Kernow Young Carers

Support children and young people who have caring responsibilities for a family member who may be affected by ill health, disability, mental ill health or substance misuse. During the coronavirus outbreak families are still receiving 1:1 support via phone, and they are considering options for virtual groups kernowyoungcarers@actionforchildren.org.uk Call: **01872 321486**

Wild Young Parents help support the most vulnerable young families through this crisis. Offices are currently closed but you can contact them on hello@wildproject.org.uk or Instagram/Facebook: [wildyoungparentsproject](https://www.instagram.com/wildyoungparentsproject) www.wildproject.org.uk

Young Minds

UK Charity for children and young people's mental health. Their website offers training, resources and support. www.youngminds.org.uk www.youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus

Student Minds

The UK's student mental health charity www.studentminds.org.uk www.studentminds.org.uk/coronavirus.html

Anna Freud

National Centre for children and families - www.annafreud.org www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus

Samaritans

Provides confidential, non-judgemental emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. Call: 116 123 (24 hours a day, free to call)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Website: www.samaritans.org

The Mix

24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone 25 and under in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help. Text THEMIX to 85258

Childline

Help and advice about a wide range of issues for children and young people up to the age of 19, talk to a counsellor online, send an email or post on the message boards. Call: **0800 1111** www.childline.org.uk

Their [Voicebox YouTube](#) channel posts videos each week about the issues that affect young people

Wellbeing Apps

Keeping healthy and well is a priority and there are now many apps available to help improve your general wellbeing, from meditation techniques to managing emotions, and reducing the urge to self-harm. Take a look at some NHS assessed apps here: www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health