



HM Prison &
Probation Service

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National
Probation
Service



Resource Pack for activities and support

Managing the anxiety around Covid-19: One day at a time

You may be feeling anxious about Covid-19 or coronavirus and this is to be expected, it is an uncertain time. Almost everyone is worried either about themselves or those close to them.

You may find that you experience greater including emotional disturbance, depression, stress, difficulty sleeping, low mood, irritability or anger and these are all normal responses to quarantine.

You are also likely experience periods of monotony and boredom, suffer from low mood and motivation, and need to tolerate being in close proximity to a small number of other people, while potentially separated from other friends and family for long periods of time.

The scale of the current pandemic might seem overwhelming (adding to our anxiety and fear), and firm information about the future is scarce. People in isolation situations emphasise the importance of staying in the present and not being too distracted by the end point. Instead, they try to break down the task or challenge (in the present case being stuck in isolation) and focus on the most important, achievable, and immediate tasks: what can be done over the next hour, day or week. This guide provides link and information to support you.

If you do not have access to the internet, then if you are an AP resident, then you can ask a member of staff if they could download or print it for you.



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CARE

Calm: Calming messages and anxiety-reducing environment and activity

Self-isolation has the potential to increase emotional distress and the risk of self-harm. Keeping active, keeping in contact with friends and family in a safe way, safe times out of your room or accommodation (e.g. having a shower, cooking and walks in the open air), talking about concerns, and personal anxiety-reducing activities (e.g. mindfulness) can help you stay feeling well. Try to avoid social media which is hyping things up but keep informed through good sources of information which is balanced with positive and includes uplifting news.

Activity: Keeping active both mind and body

Remaining active and having useful things or activities which have meaning to you whilst also keeping busy will be important in keeping your mind active and maintaining wellbeing and health. Where possible and safe, have a walk or exercise on your own. Think broadly and try some new things!

Routine: Continue with routine activities and finding a new routine to the day

It is very helpful for wellbeing to have a routine, especially for people who struggle with all the changes which are going on right now. Developing a plan/routine for yourself can fill the time but also mean you don't spend too much time doing unhelpful things. It is important to continue with your keywork and professional support sessions as much as can be made possible.

Engage: Communicate openly & support engagement with family, friends, wider society and staff

Having less social interaction will be the hardest element of isolation for many. Think about ways in which you can help your fellow residents to have sense of community keeping contact (e.g. setting a competition for everyone to do in their own rooms).

Below are lots of ideas to get you started

Establish a routine

Adapting to this new situation will take a few days but can be helped by establishing a routine. This can facilitate a sense of control and helps reduce uncertainty by building a consistent structure into each day. Keeping some of the regular elements of your routine (e.g. time you wake up and go to sleep) can help life remain feeling more normal.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Keeping your body active

Keeping active is very important in keeping healthy in both body and mind.

Current guidance from NHS is that, unless in self-isolation or required to stay indoors is that going for a walk, run or cycle on your own is still recommended. Building exercise into a routine is also an effective way of counteracting feelings of monotony and boredom and reducing feelings of stress.

Music – putting music or a podcast on your headphones can help distract, entertain or motivate you while you exercise.

If there is a garden, even if self-isolating, you may be able to still get outside but if in shared accommodation, check first with other residents and staff, as necessary..

In room (or garden) workouts

Gym Free Workouts. Put the fun back into fitness with these equipment-free workouts for all levels. These illustrated guides are designed to help make your workouts effective and easy to follow. Many of these routines count towards your recommended 150 minutes a week of exercise and muscle-strengthening activity.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/gym-free-workouts/>

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/activity/10-minute-workout>

<https://www.shape.com/fitness/workouts/ultimate-hotel-room-workout>

Mindful sports

A mindful sport, such as [yoga](#), [pilates](#), [tai chi](#) – the NHS website has information about what these involve and you can watch and access online videos.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/?tabname=pilates-and-yoga>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/pilates-for-beginners/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/yoga-with-lj/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/chair-based-pilates-exercise-video/>



Even if you're not into exercise....

Try to sit less – if you spend lots of time sitting down, try to get up and move around a bit every hour. If you're worried you might forget, you could set an alarm to remind yourself.

Keeping your mind active

It can be tempting to spend lots of time online or watching the TV but this can heighten anxiety and can increase a sense of monotony and boredom.

Try to break down being stuck in isolation and focus on the most important, achievable, and immediate tasks: what can be done over the next hour, day or week.

Distraction Box

The AP will have a distraction box with some activities in it to keep you occupied, so ask what they have. If you have any ideas of other things or the box, then do share them with the AP Manager who can consider the request.

Free online courses

Having or finding a sense of purpose is likely to be helpful so you can think about completing projects, taking online courses and learning new skills as a way of staying motivated and distracted.

From cooking to languages to history!

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/onlinecourses/>

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses>

<https://www.duolingo.com/> - learn lots of languages for free



Crosswords (including in different languages)

<https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/free-crossword-puzzles-play-online-print-2808328>

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/fabulous/puzzles/>

<http://multilingualbooks.com/crosswords.html>



Brain Games – There are many brain games online. If you in AP, then your AP staff may have booklets of brain games in the distraction box or could print, so ask them for a copy.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/brainsmart/games/>

Keeping Connected

Keeping connected is vital at this time



You should keep in contact with family and friends regularly via phone, facetime (or similar) or email.

Sharing events with others : A common technique used by those familiar with isolation (e.g. on the space station!) is having *celebratory meals*. Celebrations could be the achievement of a milestone, or a festive event (a birthday, for instance) and they help foster a sense of togetherness. Modern technology could allow people to ‘share’ these meals with others via video link.



Online supports

Its also important to stay connected with the wider world and there are lots of ways you can do this including online. Bear in mind that some phone-based and most face-to-face services will be under pressure or closed. So, here are a few options for online based ways of staying connected.

Faith based online links

You could call your local place of workshop or look online A few suggestions for details of activities amongst a small selection:

Muslim Council of Britain: <https://mcb.org.uk/about/>

Church of England: Time to Pray App or Daily Prayer app. Christian Community prayers – Every day at 12:30pm people will be saying prayers as community.

https://admin.hymnsam.co.uk/Mailshot/MailshotViewer.aspx?SID=90093443727&PFN=App_sforPrayingatHome_17_Mar_15_00_23.html

Roman Catholic: Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales have many resources available at: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/> and the Liturgy Office, <https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk>

Keeping calm and a sense of personal control

In true conditions of sensory deprivation, with little external stimulation and limited access to outside resources, shifting focus internally and using techniques such as self-talk, visualisation or breathing practices and meditation can be helpful. These techniques can be used to create a sense of personal control when other aspects of the environment cannot be changed.

Mental Health and wellbeing

The NHS has a library with many mental health wellbeing Apps:

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health/>

The charity MIND has pulled together some helpful information and resources on coronavirus and wellbeing, available here: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

Keeping a diary



During periods of confinement has a long history, as a way of working through thoughts, including frustrations and worries. Keeping a regular log – on paper, online, or by video – can help you feel better.

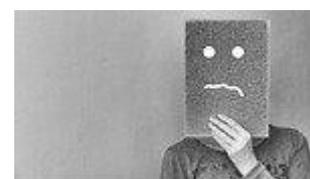
Mindfulness

Mindfulness can be used as a highly effective tool to increase your level of self-awareness, sharpen your clarity of mind and mental focus, and increase your level of overall resilience in your day to day life.

<https://mindfulnessexercises.com/free-mindfulness-worksheets/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/bedtime-meditation/>

<https://www.headspace.com/mindfulness>



Managing our emotions

It is an uncertain time for everyone and the speed of the concerns have meant that things are not going to run as normal for some time. Those around you will be trying their best and will also be worried and dealing with concerns.

Anxiety

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/blog/health-and-other-forms-of-anxiety-and-coronavirus/>
<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/blog/covid-19-and-anxiety-part2/>



Anger and Frustration: Feeling angry will be normal, as it is frustrating time as we can't do what we want or other people aren't able to help like they did, but keeping our cool and not getting angry AT someone else will be necessary to keep our own wellbeing.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/controlling-anger/>

If you are struggling with living with your family: <http://respect.uk.net/>



Low mood and depression

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/low-mood-and-depression/>

Alcohol and Drug Support

There may be less availability in community drug and alcohol support but many organisations will still offer online support.

SMART Recovery <https://smartrecovery.org.uk/online-meetings/>

Alcoholics Anonymous <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Find-a-Meeting/Online>

Narcotics Anonymous <https://online.ukna.org/>

Cocaine Anonymous <https://www.ca-online.org/>

All fellowships <https://www.intherooms.com/home/>

SUPPORT



Apps to help with self-harm or suicidal thoughts

You may find you cannot use your usual ways to manage any feelings to self-harm or thoughts of suicide; and these apps are designed to help you.

Stay Alive <https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay-alive-app/>



The Stay Alive app is a suicide prevention resource, packed full of useful information and tools to help you stay safe in crisis. You can use it if you are having thoughts of suicide or if you are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide.

The app links you directly to local and national crisis resources, so you won't need to carry around slips of paper with contact details on. If the resource isn't listed, simply add in your own.

distrACT <https://www.expertselfcare.com/health-apps/distract/>

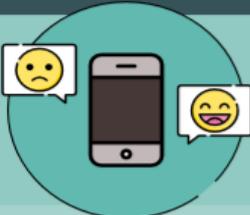
This app provides access to general health information and advice about self-harm. It was created by practicing medical doctors together with young adults and experts in self-harm and suicide prevention.

Blue Ice <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/blueice/>

Blue Ice is an app to help young people manage their emotions and reduce urges to [self-harm](#). It includes a mood diary, a toolbox of evidence-based techniques to reduce distress and automatic routing to emergency numbers if urges to harm continue.

World Health Organization

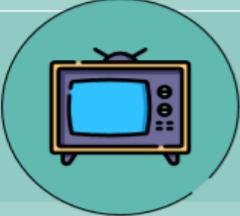
Coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak

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It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.
Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.
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If you must stay at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle - including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contacts with loved ones at home and by email and phone with other family and friends.
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Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions.
If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor. Have a plan, where to go to and how to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.
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Get the facts. Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as WHO website or, a local or state public health agency.
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Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.
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Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you to manage previous life's adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak.