Coronavirus: How to Protect your Mental Wellbeing

Infectious disease outbreaks, like the current Coronavirus (Covid 19), can be scary and can affect our mental health. While it is important to stay informed, there are also many things we can do to support and manage our wellbeing during such times.

Here are some tips we hope will help you, your friends and your family to look after your mental health at a time when there is much discussion of potential threats to our physical health

1. Create a new daily routine. Prioritise looking after yourself. You could try reading more or watching movies, having an exercise routine, trying new relaxation techniques, or finding new knowledge on the internet.

2. Self-isolation does not mean social isolation. Try to stay connected, at times of stress, we work better in company and with support. Try and keep in touch with your friends and family, by telephone, email or social media.

3. Limit your exposure to anxiety provoking content. There is extensive news coverage about the outbreak. If you find that the news is causing you stress, it’s important to find a balance. It’s best that you don’t avoid all news and that you keep informing and educating yourself but limit your news intake if it is bothering you.

How to manage your wellbeing if you’re in self isolation:

- Avoid burnout: With weeks and months of the coronavirus pandemic ahead, it is important to have down-time. Mind recommends continuing to access nature and sunlight wherever possible. Do exercise, eat well and stay hydrated.

- Utilise outdoor spaces. Take regular breaks and leave your desk if you are working from home.

Anxiety UK recommend APPLE: A Mindful Response to Thoughts

- Acknowledge: Notice and acknowledge the uncertainty as it comes to mind.
- Pause: Don’t react as you normally do. Don’t react at all. Pause and breathe.
- Pull back: Tell yourself this is just the worry talking, and this apparent need for certainty is not helpful and not necessary. It is only a thought or feeling. Don’t believe everything you think. Thoughts are not statements or facts.
- Let go: Let go of the thought or feeling. It will pass. You don’t have to respond to them. You might imagine them floating away in a bubble or cloud.
- Explore: Explore the present moment, because right now, in this moment, all is well. Notice your breathing and the sensations of your breathing. Notice the ground beneath you. Look around and notice what you see, what you hear, what you can touch, what you can smell. Right now. Then shift your focus of attention to something else - on what you need to do, on what you were doing before you noticed the worry, or do something else - mindfully with your full attention.