**MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS**

**HELPING YOURSELF AND SUPPORTING OTHERS**

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There’s a good deal we can do to look after our own mental health and support others – even if we feel that we lack skills and confidence.  It’s important, though, to recognise when we or those we are supporting might be in need of some professional help: there is some information on sources of support below.

5 ways to look after your mental health during lockdown…

1. Start with the basics: eat well, do some physical activity each day and develop a regular sleep routine.  These are the foundations of good mental health.
2. Stay in touch with people in whichever way works for you: letter, text message, phone call, Facetime, Zoom…
3. Do something positive for yourself each day.  Sit outside with a good book, listen to music, have a bath, cook and eat something delicious...
4. Limit your news and media intake to once or twice a day, and definitely not at bedtime!  Consider having a news-free day each week.
5. Remember that this is a temporary situation, and we can and will get through it – and may even take something positive from it.

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**If you find yourself struggling, talk to someone, whether a family member, friend, neighbour or professional.**

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**…and 3 ways to support others**

1. Let them know that you’re available to talk and, more importantly, listen.
2. If you can’t see them in person, let them know you’re thinking of them: a phone call, text or act of kindness (e.g. a treat left on their doorstep) can go a long way.
3. Know the limits of the support you can offer, and encourage them to seek professional help if they’re struggling

Self-Help Information and Resources

* HeadSpace. https://www.headspace.com/  - or download the app on your Smartphone.

Teaches the skills of mindfulness and meditation in short sessions that can easily be slotted into your day.Currently offering a free 2-week trial.

* Mind. https://www.mind.org.uk/ Leading mental health charity with loads of information on mental health, mental health problems and sources of support.  Dedicated information for children and young people.
* There are some good apps and resources already on the website that could be mentioned/linked to here?

**SEEKING HELP FROM VOLUNTEERS AND PROFESSIONALS**

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There are a number of volunteer groups, organisations and NHS services out there that offer support with mental health difficulties.  They are used to helping all sorts of people with all sorts of problems, so never feel worried that you won’t be taken seriously – and don’t hesitate to reach out if you need to.  Most of these groups will also support those worried about somebody close to them.

General Support​

* Devon Access First Response. 24-hour open-access doorway to NHS mental health support and services for anyone in crisis and seeking help.  Available for self-referral, carers/families and practitioners.  Tel. 0300 555 5000.
* Shout.  Sometimes texting is easier than talking.  24/7 text support from a team of trained volunteers for those struggling to cope.  Text “Shout” free to 85258 to begin a conversation.
* Talkworks: Free, confidential NHS talking therapy service for people in Devon, helping you to feel better and giving you the tools and techniques to improve mental and physical wellbeing.  Call 0300 555 3344 or see https://www.talkworks.dpt.nhs.uk
* The Samaritans.  Free 24-hour phone helpline for those who are struggling to cope: 116 123.  You can also access support via e-mail: jo@samaritans.org

**For Children and Young People**

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* Childline.  Help for young people aged 19 or under with anything that may be worrying you.
* Call free on 0800 1111 (9am-midnight);
* Chat with a counsellor online https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/;
* Tips on coping with the Coronavirus lockdown: https://www.childline.org.uk/get-involved/coronavirus-lockdown-extension/
* Ditch the Label.  Support with bullying.  https://www.ditchthelabel.org/get-help
* Young Minds.  Mental health information and support for young people and their parents.  https://youngminds.org.uk
* Free Parents Helpline:  0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am – 4pm).

**For Older People**

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* The Silver Line.  Free 24-hour helpline providing information, friendship and advice.  0800 4 70 80 90.

**Support with Addiction**

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* Alcoholics Anonymous.  Help and support for anyone with alcohol problems.  Call free on 0800 9177 650, or email help@aamail.org  alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
* Frank.  Confidential information and advice about drugs, their effects and the law.  Call 0300 123 6600 or text 82111 www.talktofrank.com
* GamCare.  Information, advice and support for anyone affected by problem gambling.  Call free on 0808 8020 133 www.gamcare.org.uk
* We are with you.  Supports people with drug, alcohol or mental health problems, and their friends and family. www.wearewithyou.org.uk

**Support with Domestic Violence**

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* Devon Domestic Abuse Support Service.  Confidential helpline available 9.30am – 4.30pm.  0345 155 1074.
* Women’s Aid.  24-hour support available on 0808 2000 247.  www.womensaid.org.uk

**Support with Eating Disorders**

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* Beat.  Support for people struggling with issues around food, and those who support them. Lots of information online at https://beateatingdisorders.org.uk
* Adult Helpline: 0808 801 0677 or help@beateatingdisorders.org.uk
* Studentline for all students: 0808 801 0811studentline@beateatingdisorders.org.uk
* Youthline for people under 18: 0808 801 0711 or fyp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk

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**Concerned about that extra glass during lockdown?**

One Small Step offers an online assessment tool as well as support from health coaches online and over the phone. To take your first step to drinking less, visit the One Small Step website.

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**# VoicingLoneliness**

Devon Communities Together  is creating a sound archive as part of a Devon Highlights project called #VoicingLoneliness.
This is an opportunity to ‘tell your story’ as part of a Devon wide archive of sound, to document the key themes of isolation and loneliness at an unprecedented time in history.  The aim is to start to have more honest conversations and dialogue around the realities of isolation and loneliness, and all our stories can help to remove the stigma of loneliness and help that to happen.