

Mental Health & Covid-19

At a recent BCA Communications Committee Meeting it was felt that a focus on mental health was going to be an ever more important topic as social distancing and self-isolation measures continued in the weeks ahead

With that in mind, and to aid members locate appropriate guidance in this area, BCA has pulled together the following information and links from both government and mental health charities – information specific to the current Covid-19 pandemic.

The latest guidance published by UK Govt is detailed below.

Public Health England has also produced a guide entitled [Looking after your feelings and your body](#)

Additionally the World Health Organisation has published similar information relating to the [Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations](#) alongside infographics on dealing with stress for both [adults](#) and [children](#)

Finally the mental health charity MIND is one of a number of charities also producing information on [support and well-being](#)

UK Govt - How to protect your mental health and wellbeing:

- **Continue to connect with others:** some experts prefer the term “physical distancing” to “social distancing”. In the age of technology, it is easier than ever to stay in touch with loved ones via phone calls, video messages or social media
- **Reach out to those you suspect are struggling:** message people who could do with a helping hand or hearing a friendly voice
- **A problem shared is a problem halved:** don’t keep your emotions bottled up. Confide in a loved one or [call a mental-health helpline](#) like [the Samaritans](#) on 116 123
- **Acknowledge how you are feeling:** recognise you feel anxious, lonely or confused. While we all have a part to play in stemming this outbreak, remember there is only so much you as an individual can do
- **Look after your physical health:** challenging times can make people turn to alcohol or cigarettes. Rather than falling into unhealthy habits, which may persist once the outbreak is over, try and make healthy meals from scratch. Avoid smoking or excess alcohol, drink plenty of water, and try and get a good night’s sleep. With the enforcements allowing us out to exercise, take the opportunity to go for a walk, jog or cycle
- **Get plenty of sleep:** it may be easier said than done, but try and get the recommended seven-to-nine hours of shut eye a night. Cutting down on caffeine, ensuring your bed is comfortable and reading a relaxing book before you turn in are all easy ways to improve [“sleep hygiene”](#)
- **Manage where you get your information from:** if scrolling social media or watching breaking news makes your emotions worse, try and limit these activities to set times of the day
- **Plan a routine:** life likely seems very different to just a few weeks ago, however, you can keep busy within your home by reading a book that has been on your “list” or trying a complicated recipe
- **Set goals:** many may feel without a sense of purpose. Set goals, like learning a language online, and congratulate your success
- **Keep your mind active:** try painting, completing a crossword or doing a jigsaw
- **Focus on the present:** take it one day at time and try not to worry too much about how it may all play out. [Mindfulness](#) and [meditation](#) may help
- **Get outside if you can:** very few of us are “housebound” during this. Take advantage of the time allowed for exercise. Sit in the garden, if you have one, or open your windows and bring nature in by buying some plants