**Supporting staff wellbeing through coronavirus**

Dear colleagues

The outbreak of Covid-19 is, understandably, causing a great deal of worry and increasing our levels of stress and anxiety. Alongside taking precautions around hygiene etc., it’s also important to look after our mental health and wellbeing. It’s easy for things to feel confusing and overwhelming, however, there are some simple steps that we can all take that could help reduce the stress and anxiety that this is causing.

A great starting point is this booklet My Whole Self from [MHFA](https://mhfaengland.org/my-whole-self/) England.

1. **Information and news.** Try to avoid checking the news all the time, rather perhaps check it twice a day. Use reputable sources for the latest information and try to avoid social media stories and fake news. It’s important to avoid speculation as this can cause worry for no reason. The [NHS coronavirus webpages](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/) and [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response) are reliable reference points.
2. **Exercise and get fresh air.** Take the opportunity to walk the dog, go for a jog or ride your bike. Some good Youtube channels for a quick burst of different levels of yoga, pilates or HIIT to suit your time and mood are [Boho Beautiful](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWN2FPlvg9r-LnUyepH9IaQ) and[FitnessBlender](https://www.youtube.com/user/FitnessBlender).

The [National](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/press-release/the-national-trusts-latest-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19) Trust have announced that although their buildings and cafes will be closed, grounds and carparks will be open and free to anyone needing to walk or play outside.

1. **Stay connected.** In times of stress we work better in company – even if it is digital. It’s important to stay in touch with colleagues, friends and family to maintain a strong support network. It really helps to talk through worries and concerns with others. I’ve been encouraging my children to facetime grandparents who are isolating at this time. Invite a colleague for a virtual coffee break– if you can't get together face to face, why not connect with someone and invite them for a virtual cuppa?
2. **Be cheerful**.One of the values of the Royal Marines is ‘cheerfulness in the face of adversity’. Don’t underestimate the value of a smile, a kind or uplifting word. This raises the human spirit.
3. Try to find distractions with enjoyable things – this is a good way to take your mind off the news. If you do need to self-isolate, do something you’ve always wanted to do (at home) but never had time for. Bake bread, check out Youtube for [Zumba classes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxcdTVEYn6U), learn a language or an instrument, paint, get on top of the garden, play board games, do puzzles, read a great book or two.
4. **Counselling**. If your workplace has a counselling service or employee assistant programme, check in with them for help, advice and support.
5. **Sleep**. Try to look after your sleep hygiene and avoid checking the news just before you go to bed. Think about a wind down routine, such as reading a novel or trying herbal tea.
6. **Help others**. I’m sure you have heard of the great stories of acts of kindness at present. This also presents an opportunity to help our neighbour. You might want to [use this postcard](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-51880695) to help self-isolating neighbours.
7. **Look after yourself**. It’s important to take time to look after yourself. Don’t feel guilty for having some ‘you’ time. Aim to have a regular happy hour where you [do something just for yourself](https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/campaigns/mhaw2018/Self%20Care.jpg).
8. **Use the UFO model**. [James Shone](https://icanandiam.com/) recently gave a talk about wellbeing to parents and spoke about his model ofUFO. This mnemonic was a great support to him and brought him hope and strength through a very challenging chapter in his life.

To look **Up** – to draw strength from our inspirations, principles, values, morality or faith.

To look **Forward** – with hope and optimism.

To look **Outwards** – particularly to help and support others in our community, especially the vulnerable, lonely and isolated.

**Useful advice and resources**

* [Mind – Coronavirus and your wellbeing](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/)
* [Mental Health Foundation – Looking after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak)
* [The Church of England – prayers and resources which can be used at home](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/midweek_worship_at_home_0.pdf)