

# Resource Guide

## Support and Guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Developed by the Older People's Psychology Service

This resource guide has been compiled as a useful starting point for individuals, and those supporting service users, seeking advice and guidance about various issues that may arise during the COVID-19 pandemic. This document follows the seven key components of Psychological First Aid (Care, Protect, Comfort, Support, Provide, Connect, and Educate) including resources for practical issues, as well as information and self-help guides for emotional wellbeing.

The resources highlighted are by no means an exhaustive list but have been helpful and shared throughout psychological services in NHSGGC.

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## Educate

Educate about normal responses.

The current COVID-19 crisis will undoubtedly affect us all; financially, physically, socially and psychologically.

We are all facing a new and scary situation, with much uncertainty around the very real challenges of an infectious disease.

It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during this crisis. The intensity of our emotions will come and go. These responses are both normal and natural reactions to a situation where there is both danger and uncertainty for ourselves and others.

*These reactions and responses can be best understood as the normal reactions of human beings to sudden, unexpected and terrifying events.*

Common signs of distress:

- Feelings of shock, numbness, or disbelief
- Change in energy levels and activity levels (less or more)
- Difficulty concentrating
- Changes in appetite
- Sleep problems or nightmares
- Feeling anxious, fearful, or angry
- Headaches, body pain, skin rashes
- Symptoms of chronic health problems get worse
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs

It is important to remember that everyone responds differently to stress – some people may not experience any signs of distress at all, whereas others may experience distress to a severe degree. Above is a list of common signs of distress to look out for, although these are natural responses to traumatic events, it is important to spot the signs of increasing distress and seek help if our distress becomes overwhelming.

***Try and not compare your reaction to someone else's. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to think, feel and respond to this crisis.***

## CARE

Care for immediate needs for safety.

*Firstly, it is important to think about what your immediate needs are such as; medication, food, accommodation etc.*

*Think about what would be most helpful for you right now and draw up an action plan.*

*Below are many resources to help with meeting your immediate needs.*

### **Helpful Resources:**

#### **Medical Treatment**

Latest Guidance about COVID-19 from NHS Scotland and Scottish Government, including self-help guide for symptoms and information on how to look after a cough/fever:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>

#### **Medication & Food**

Information from the Scottish Government about the shielding SMS service; providing a free weekly delivery of basic groceries, and medication deliveries for those shielding:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding-contacts/pages/overview/>

Contact numbers for arranging the SMS shielding service, including contact numbers for those who do not own a mobile:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-shielding-contacts/pages/contacts/>

#### **Accommodation**

Guidance from the Scottish Government with regards to homelessness:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-homelessness/>

Information of Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI); a loan for homeowners struggling to pay their mortgage:

<https://www.gov.uk/support-for-mortgage-interest>

Information on discretionary housing payment; for those who are renting and currently receive housing benefits/universal credit but are still struggling to pay their housing costs:

<https://www.mygov.scot/discretionary-housing-payment/>

Emergency legislation, which has increased eviction notice period for private and social tenants:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2020/7/contents/enacted>

## **PROTECT**

Protect from risk of infection and any other threats.

*Next you should consider your physical and emotional safety and comfort.*

*It is suggested that people only access reputable sources of information once or twice a day to reduce anxiety.*

*It is helpful to ensure you have up-to-date and accurate information about COVID-19. Below is a help list of resources, guidance and advice put together to help people protect themselves from further risks and deal with particular difficulties.*

### **Advice for family and carers of people who are sick.**

General advice for everyone regarding COVID-19:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

NHS Self-help guide to find out more about symptoms, when you can use self-care, and what to do if conditions worsen and require medical help:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-coronavirus-covid-19>

NHS how to wash your hands guidance and video demonstration:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

NHS Inform advice on how to care for a cough:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/lungs-and-airways/cough>

NHS Inform advice on how to care for a fever in adults:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/fever-in-adults>

NHS Inform advice on how to care for a fever in children:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/fever-in-children>

### **Vulnerable Groups**

Information from Police Scotland about scams/fraud related to coronavirus:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/personal-safety/shut-out-scammers>

### **Domestic Violence**

A guide for victims and survivors of domestic abuse during COVID-19 self-isolation:

<https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safety%20planning%20guide,%200victims%20and%20survivors,%20COVID-19.pdf>

Rape Crisis offers help and information for those who have been raped or sexually abused, or are supporting someone else who has. They also have a range of self-care resources for survivors including: self-harm, trauma, nightmares & sleep problems, flashbacks, and coping after sexual violence:  
<https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/help-introduction/>

Advice on dealing with domestic violence:  
[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

#### **Useful Phone Numbers:**

Police Scotland - **999** for emergencies and **101** for non-emergencies  
Scotland's 24-hour Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline - **0800 027 1234**  
Galop LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline - **0800 999 5428**  
Men's Advice Line - **0808 801 0327**  
Rape Crisis Scotland – **08088 01 03 02**  
Refuge - **0808 2000 247**

#### **Loss of Job**

Job Hub provides support for those who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19; listing jobs available (temporary and permanent basis) with immediate start dates, as well as advice on workers rights during crisis.  
<https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/has-your-job-been-affected-covid-19-coronavirus>

#### **Long Term Conditions**

COVID-19 information, FAQ's and other links for related advice about managing COVID-19 and living with it in the context of multiple health conditions.  
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/coronavirus/coronavirus/>

Advice for specific medical conditions including: cancer, diabetes, heart disease, inflammatory bowel disease; chronic kidney and liver disease; dermatological, neurological, respiratory and rheumatic conditions; and rare diseases.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-tailored-advice-for-those-who-live-with-specific-medical-conditions/>

Chronic pain self-help online CBT guide. Takes approximately 30 to 40 minutes to work through guide and can be downloaded as a PDF.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health/mental-health-self-help-guides/chronic-pain-self-help-guide>

#### **Health Advice for people with:**

Joint and muscle conditions, such as arthritis – [Versus Arthritis: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Heart disease – [British Heart Foundation: coronavirus – what it means for you if you have heart or circulatory disease](#)

Stroke – [Stroke Association: information on coronavirus for stroke survivors](#)

Asthma – [Asthma UK: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Other lung conditions, such as COPD – [British Lung Foundation: coronavirus and COVID-19](#)

**Protect yourself from additional stress by only reading information from legitimate sources and limiting use of social media**

The social media channels for the Scottish government are:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/scottishgovernment>

<https://twitter.com/scotgov>

<https://www.instagram.com/scotgov>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheScottishGovernment/>

## COMFORT

Comfort and Console.

*During this time you may find that some friends, family and colleagues are particularly distressed.*

*When talking to someone who is distressed it is helpful to speak calmly, with compassion and allow for silence and plenty of time for responses – try not to interrupt.*

*Let the person tell you what they need. Acknowledge how they are feeling and any losses or important events they tell you about. Don't say "You shouldn't feel that way / you should feel lucky you survived." Don't give false promises or false reassurances.*

*It is helpful not to think and act as if you must solve all their problems for them. Acknowledge the person's strengths and how they have helped themselves.*

### Communicating with someone who is distressed:

- 1. Active listening:** Make the person feel heard and validated which can help defuse overwhelming emotions
  - **Listen non-judgementally:** allow the person to tell you everything. Allow time for silence.  
'Go on...I'm listening'
  - **Reflect back to them:** this shows you are listening and value them  
'I hear you are saying...'  
'I want to be sure I understand...you're saying...'  
'Does that sound right?'  
'Let me know if I've misunderstood'
  - **Provide empathy and validation:** make them feel understood and supported  
'That must be really worrying for you'  
'I can only imagine how upset you must have felt'  
'How difficult for you'  
'How painful'  
'That must be really difficult, I would feel the same'
  - **Note strengths and positives** helps to ground someone, highlights strengths  
'It sounds like a lot of people care about you...'  
'You must be a strong individual to have...'  
'It sounds like...is very important to you'  
'You've handled a lot'

Once you feel someone's distress has reduced:

2. **Explore options:** explore unmet needs contributing to distress  
'What do you feel you need right now?'  
'What might make this better?'
3. **Select a first step:** make a plan to meet a need

## Helpful Resources:

Ready Scotland support and volunteer. Website which provides opportunities to volunteer and help others (e.g. telephone support), as well as resources for those seeking support:

<https://www.readyscotland.org/coronavirus/>

Guide on how to aid someone to seek help for themselves, and how to offer emotional support:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/helping-someone-else-seek-help/>

A video example provided by the British Red Cross: Talking to someone who is distressed:

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/first-aid/learn-first-aid/distress##>

Advice on talking to children about coronavirus:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>

## SUPPORT

Support for practical tasks.

*It's useful to try and identify any services and/or local community supports that you might need, such as:*

- *Medical services*
- *Housing services*
- *Financial services*
- *Social services*
- *Childcare*
- *Faith based services*
- *Funeral services*
- *Support groups*

*Think about if you have any immediate/ongoing dangers or security concerns that need addressing.*

*Try to:*

- *Clarify your options*
- *Think about which options work best for you.*
- *Take action, make an appointment if necessary.*

*Below are many helpful resources that can direct you to appropriate sources of support.*

### **Helpful Resources:**

#### **Local Services:**

Online directory of Glasgow community support around COVID-19. Find help getting food, medicine and a range of other crisis support.

Services include: food/shopping delivery, pharmacy pick up, hot meals, food parcels, energy & utilities, reducing social isolation, financial assistance, benefits advice, crisis support, additional social care support.

The helpline is currently open Monday to Friday 9 am – 5 pm and can be contacted by:

Telephone: 0141 345 0543

E-mail: [helpline@gcvs.org.uk](mailto:helpline@gcvs.org.uk)

Twitter: [@GlasgowCVS](https://twitter.com/GlasgowCVS)

Visit: <https://www.glasgowhelps.org>

#### **Financial Services**

Information on universal credit; payment to help with living costs. Includes eligibility and how to apply:

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

Information on what to do if you cannot pay your bills:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/debt-and-money/if-you-cant-pay-your-bills-because-of-coronavirus/>

Guidance on what benefits you can get if you have been affected by coronavirus:  
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/benefits/coronavirus-check-what-benefits-you-can-get/>

Guidance on changes to some benefits due to coronavirus:  
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/benefits/coronavirus-check-if-there-are-changes-to-your-benefits/>

## **Social Services**

Helpful tool to direct you to the relevant social service and council website in Scotland:

<https://www.mygov.scot/social-services/>

Information from Citizens Advice Bureau and getting social care support; including updates for during the pandemic:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/family/help-for-adults-in-the-community-s/social-care-and-support-s/>

## **Childcare**

Guidance about school and early learning closures including information for key workers with children and children with additional needs:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-guide-schools-early-learning-closures/pages/overview/>

## **Faith Based Services**

Updated information on churches from Church of Scotland:

<https://churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/covid-19-coronavirus-advice/advice-for-churches-covid-19-coronavirus>

Links to live streaming Church of Scotland services and downloadable recordings for various churches in Scotland:

<https://churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/services-online>

Latest information about Catholic Chapel from the Bishop's conference of Scotland:

<https://www.bcos.org.uk/News/tabid/113/Default.aspx>

Links to live streaming of Catholic mass and schedules:

<https://www.churchservices.tv/country/scotland/>

Updated coronavirus information for Muslim communities from the Muslim Council of Britain:

<https://mcb.org.uk/mcb-updates/coronavirus-guidance-for-mosques-and-madrassas/>

Glasgow Gurdwara website for the Sikh community:

<http://www.glasgowgurdwara.org/>

Information for Sikh communities in relation to coronavirus including links to live streaming:

<http://www.citysikhs.org.uk/coronavirus-and-the-sikh-community/>

Information for Jewish communities in relation to COVID-19 from the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities:

<https://www.scojec.org/news/2020/coronavirus/community.html>

Contact details and information for Jewish facilities in Scotland:

<https://www.scojec.org/resources/files/guidebook.pdf>

## **Funeral Services**

CO-OP Funeral Care statement and answers to frequently asked questions regarding funeral services:

<https://www.coop.co.uk/funeralcare/coronavirus>

Guidance on preparation for burial or cremation arrangements during the pandemic, including information for religious organisations, faith and cultural groups:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-religious-organisations-faith-and-cultural-groups---preparation-for-burial-or-cremation-of-covid-19-deceased/>

## PROVIDE

Provide information on coping.

*This section aims to help reduce distress and promote ways of coping.*

*It is helpful to identify your own successful coping mechanisms that you may have used in the past. It is also helpful to think about ways you can adapt your normal coping strategies to social isolation conditions.*

*Unhelpful ways of coping are understandable responses to traumatic/overwhelming events but may lead to other problems. Consider whether you have been using unhelpful coping strategies and how often.*

*Thinking about how we will cope in the future and planning how to implement helpful coping strategies can increase sense of control and helps us to make conscious choices about how to cope.*

<i>Helpful Coping</i>	<i>Unhelpful Coping</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Use coping mechanisms that have worked well in the past.</i></li><li>• <i>Talk to others for support.</i></li><li>• <i>Engage in positive, distracting activities.</i></li><li>• <i>Get enough rest, nutrition and exercises.</i></li><li>• <i>Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.</i></li><li>• <i>Timetable some pleasant activities.</i></li><li>• <i>Take part in an online support group.</i></li><li>• <i>Use humour.</i></li><li>• <i>Focus on something practical that will help the situation right now.</i></li><li>• <i>Understand and tolerate the different ways people cope with stress.</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Alcohol and substance misuse</i></li><li>• <i>Withdrawing from friends and family</i></li><li>• <i>Over/under eating</i></li><li>• <i>Blaming self or others</i></li><li>• <i>Doing risky things</i></li><li>• <i>Getting violently angry</i></li></ul>

## **Helpful Resources:**

### **Coping**

Mind – for better mental health; a charity providing helpful information on COVID-19 and wellbeing:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

FACE COVID – an animated video on coping with coronavirus using principles from acceptance and commitment therapy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmvNCdpHUYM>

Useful ‘how to’ guides for video sessions and using technology such as Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp. Also helpful coping strategy guide books:

<https://www.gateway-psychology.co.uk/about-gateway-psychology-services/coronavirus-advice/coronavirus-tips-and-advice/>

Video on coping with fears of self-isolation:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2020/mar/19/coronavirus-how-to-cope-with-anxiety-and-self-isolation-video-explainer>

Article written by a Clinical Psychologist on “controlling” fear of coronavirus with practical tips and advice:

<https://thriveglobal.com/stories/controlling-your-fear-about-the-coronavirus-practice-these-10-things-instead/?fbclid=IwAR2NwbZeuCQmnhpLpUnmtau5yAjYip9J1KpuBgB7HdTADtm0qHwsue8BLI0>

The Little Book of Wellbeing – tips from people in healthcare working in healthcare on how we can take care of ourselves and each other:

<https://rcpsg.ac.uk/documents/publications/1263-the-little-book-of-wellbeing/file>

Guidance written by Occupational Therapists to cope with social distancing, particularly for those over the age of 70, who have underlying health conditions, or families to support children:

<https://www.rcot.co.uk/staying-well-when-social-distancing>

### **Worry**

A Guide to living with worry and anxiety during global uncertainty:

<https://www.psychologytools.com/articles/free-guide-to-living-with-worry-and-anxiety-amidst-global-uncertainty/>

Lifestyle and practical advice for coping with money worries as well as links for more specific money problems. Useful for those impacted financially from COVID-19:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/stress/coping-with-money-worries>

### **Anxiety**

A guide to coping with anxiety:

<http://wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/anxiety-2/>

Information and advice about Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and COVID-19 from The National OCD Charity:

<https://www.ocduk.org/ocd-and-coronavirus/>

### **Health Anxiety**

A guide to coping with health anxiety :

<http://wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/health-anxiety/>

### **Panic Attacks**

A guide to coping with Panic Attacks:

<http://wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/panic-attacks/>

### **Low Mood**

A guide to coping with low mood:

<http://wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/low-mood/>

### **Sleep**

Tips on what to do if you are having **sleep difficulties**:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep/?tabname=sleep-tips>

Information on **sleep hygiene**:

[https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~/\\_media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Sleep/Sleep%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Sleep%20Information%20Sheet%20-%202004%20-%20Sleep%20Hygiene.pdf](https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~/_media/CCI/Mental%20Health%20Professionals/Sleep/Sleep%20-%20Information%20Sheets/Sleep%20Information%20Sheet%20-%202004%20-%20Sleep%20Hygiene.pdf)

## CONNECT

Connect with social support.

*This section is about finding ways to connect with social supports.*

*It is helpful to think about who your natural support networks are and how to keep in contact with them. This may include loved ones, friends and communities through internet, telephone, online resources and/or other means.*

### **Helpful Resources: Emergency Emotional Support/Chatlines**

Call Breathing Space for free on 0800 838587  
Weekdays: Monday to Thursday 6pm to 2am  
Weekend: Friday 6pm to Monday 6am  
Visit: <https://breathingspace.scot/>

Samaritans; call anytime from any phone for free.  
Call: 116 123  
Visit: <https://www.samaritans.org/scotland/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

Shout is the UK's first 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help.  
Text: Shout to 85258  
Visit: <https://www.giveusashout.org>

Anxiety UK is a charity providing support if you have been diagnosed with an anxiety condition.  
Call: 03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 10pm; Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 8pm)  
Visit: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

### **Men Specific**

Men's Health Forum  
24/7 stress support for men by text, chat and email.  
Visit: [www.menshealthforum.org.uk](http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk)

### **Addiction (drugs, alcohol, gambling)**

Alcoholics Anonymous  
Phone: 0800 917 7650 (24-hour helpline)  
Website: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

National Gambling Helpline  
Phone: 0808 8020 133 (daily, 8am to midnight)  
Website: [www.begambleaware.org](http://www.begambleaware.org)

Narcotics Anonymous

Phone: 0300 999 1212 (daily, 10am to midnight)

Website: [www.ukna.org](http://www.ukna.org)

### **Crime victims**

Rape Crisis : To find your local services phone: 0808 802 9999 (daily, 12pm to 2.30pm and 7pm to 9.30pm)

Website: [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

Victim Support : Phone: 0808 168 9111 (24-hour helpline)

Website: [www.victimsupport.org](http://www.victimsupport.org)

### **Eating disorders**

Beat : Phone: 0808 801 0677 (adults) or 0808 801 0711 (for under-18s)

Website: [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk)

### **Learning disabilities**

Mencap :Charity working with people with a learning disability, their families and carers.

Phone: 0808 808 1111 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Website: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

### **Mental Health**

Mind: Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

No Panic: Voluntary charity offering support for sufferers of panic attacks and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). Offers a course to help overcome your phobia or OCD.

Phone: 0844 967 4848 (daily, 10am to 10pm). Calls cost 5p per minute plus your phone provider's Access Charge

OCD Action: Support for people with OCD. Includes information on treatment and online resources.

Phone: 0845 390 6232 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm). Calls cost 5p per minute plus your phone provider's Access Charge

OCD UK : A charity run by people with OCD, for people with OCD. Includes facts, news and treatments.

Phone: 0333 212 7890 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Rethink Mental Illness: Support and advice for people living with mental illness.

Phone: 0300 5000 927 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm)

SANE: Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers.

SANEline: 0300 304 7000 (daily, 4.30pm to 10.30pm)

Textcare: comfort and care via text message, sent when the person needs it

Phone: Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm)

**Loneliness:**

**Independent age**, providing befriending services: 0800 319 6789

**Royal Voluntary Service** for help, advice and support: 0845 608 0122

Call **The Silver Line** for information, advice or just for a chat, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week 0800 470 80 90

Visit **Friends of the Elderly** for year round support or call 0330 332 1110.

**Age UK**, support and advice for older people, advice line: 0800 169 6565

**Contact the Elderly**, tackling loneliness and social isolation among older people: 0800 716543

**Sense**, for advice and support on deafblindness 0300 330 9256 or 020 7520 0972.  
Textphone:0300 330 9256 or 020 7520 0972

## SELF HELP GUIDES:

- STRESS & ANXIETY
- SOCIAL ISOLATION & LONELINESS
- LOW MOOD

## COVID-19 Outbreak: Coping with Stress & Anxiety

### What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense, or afraid, particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future. Feeling anxious or nervous is a common emotion for people of all ages and is a natural human response when we perceive that we are under threat. Feeling anxious can help us handle problems and strange situations, and even avoid danger. However, when world events such as the current coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak occur, this can bring forward great uncertainty in our daily lives, which can make us feel even more anxious than usual. Indeed, fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in us. It's normal to feel stress when faced with staying indoors and interacting less with people, especially when that is added to the underlying stress of worrying whether you or your loved ones will catch the virus. Anxiety during a stressful life event such as this may contribute to:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Deterioration of mental health

### How Does Anxiety Affect Us?

Anxiety can affect how we think, how we feel emotionally, what we feel in our bodies and how we behave. All of these areas are linked and each can influence the others.

**Body:** When we perceive danger, a chain of automatic events occur in the body that prepare us for action. This is often called the '*fight or flight*' response and can be traced back to our need for survival in the past. We may experience physical sensations such as shortness of breath, heart palpitations, muscle tension, sweating, headaches, or dizziness.

**Thoughts:** When you feel anxious, you may be aware of what you say to yourself (e.g. “I’ll never get through this”) or your thoughts might be concerned with what might happen (e.g. “I’m definitely going to get the virus”). Typically when we feel anxious we may have “what if....” thoughts or tell ourselves we can’t cope. We may also ruminate (i.e. think about bad experiences over and over again).

**Feelings:** If we are anxious, we can also feel sad, irritable, frustrated, and tired.

**Behaviour:** Anxiety can affect our behaviour and may cause us to avoid things (e.g. putting off calling a friend or family member) or be on the go all the time (e.g. trying to do lots of things to distract ourselves and getting overwhelmed).

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations and sometimes the things we do to help ourselves cope can make anxiety worse (e.g. increased use of alcohol, avoiding speaking to others, staying in bed all day). So how can you manage anxiety and worry during these uncertain times? This self-help guide contains some suggestions on what you can do and where you can find further information and support.

## How Can I Manage Anxiety?

### ***Talk to Someone – Peer support***

Talking to a loved one or a person you trust can be a relief. Sharing your worries with someone may be enough to make you feel better. Using technology to connect with your social networks can be really useful and can make you feel more connected to the people in your life. There are free video chat services available, such as Messenger and Skype, that can help you feel closer to your loved ones during this difficult time.

You can find information on using technology and setting up these services here:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet/activities-and-events/social-isolation-links-pagee/>

If you feel you don't have someone you can open up to there are telephone helplines that you can call and talk to someone who is there to listen:

**Silver Line Scotland:**

Free confidential telephone helpline offering information, friendship and advice to older people - 0800 470 80 90 (24 hours).  
<https://www.thesilverline.org.uk/>

**Breathing Space:**

Free confidential telephone service - 0800 83 85 87 (evenings and weekends). [www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk](http://www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk)

**Samaritans:**

Free confidential telephone service - 01698 429411 or 116 123 (24hrs).  
[www.samaritans.com](http://www.samaritans.com)

**Age UK:**

Call in Time is a free telephone friendship service for people 60 and over. Call Age UK on 0800 055 6112 for more information.  
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/services/befriending-services/sign-up-for-telephone-befriending/>

***Try Breathing and Relaxation Techniques***

Breathing exercises can help you manage your anxiety and feel in control. You can find more information on a calming breathing technique here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/ways-relieve-stress/>

This exercise only takes a few minutes and can be done anywhere.

**Steps for Stress** is another simple guide to breathing and relaxation exercises and can be accessed on:

<https://soundcloud.com/nhs-health-scotland/sets/steps-for-stress>

There are many different activities we do in order to relax and these differ between people and based on personal preferences. Some ideas

are writing, keeping a diary or a journal, reading or re-reading some of your favourite books, watching favourite movies or TV shows, listening to podcasts, signing up to an online class, cooking, baking and experimenting with different recipes, reorganising furniture, redecorating a room or clearing out your closet, having a bath, doing some exercise at home, like Pilates or Yoga, and working on your garden.

You can find more information on relaxation tips here:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/relaxation/relaxation-tips/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapsebb8a6>

There are also many different mental health and Mindfulness apps available online that you might find useful. These can be accessed on:

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

<https://www.headspace.com/covid-19>

<https://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/asppodcast.asp>

### ***Look After your Physical Health***

Making sure you are getting enough sleep, eating well and getting some physical exercise are all very important for your mental health wellbeing and can help you cope with difficult emotions and situations.

More information can be found on:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/sleep-problems/sleep-problems/>

<https://www.sleepio.com/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/about-food-and-mood/>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/exercise/simple-exercises-inactive-adults/>

### ***Keep a Diary and Make Plans for the Future***

You might find helpful keeping a note of things that are currently going well to make sure to notice the good things too, especially when you are feeling anxious. Making a plan for each day and trying to keep to a routine even when isolating at home may also be useful. You could also write down a list of things you would like to do when you are out of isolation, like organise a dinner party for your family and friends, plan a fun outdoor activity or sign up to a community exercise class.

### ***Be Kind to Yourself***

It is normal to feel anxious and experience difficult emotions during these uncertain times. Accept your feelings and remind yourself that it is okay to feel the way that you do. Take some time to relax and do something for yourself, like having a long bath or cooking your favourite meal.

### ***Limit Media Consumption***

Although it can be helpful to keep up to date with the latest advice and health information, you do not want to feed your anxiety and fear with constant updates about the state of the virus.

Try to limit your media consumption to an extent. Watching too much news, reading too many articles, and consuming too much content can be upsetting and overwhelming. You might decide to check the news twice a day; or decide to limit your time on social media if everyone is talking about the virus. Make sure you seek sites that give factual information about what you can do to stay healthy, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) <https://www.who.int>

### **Where Can I Access Further Information?**

- **Age UK:**  
**A charity for older people providing free online information and advice on a range of topics including health and wellbeing, money matters, legal and family issues, and help and support.**  
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/depression-anxiety/>

- **Psychology Tools:**  
Online resource related to worry and anxiety in the context of uncertainty.  
[https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide to living with worry and anxiety amidst global uncertainty\\_en-us.pdf](https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide%20to%20living%20with%20worry%20and%20anxiety%20amidst%20global%20uncertainty_en-us.pdf)
- **Headspace:**  
Mindfulness and meditation app which is free to download.  
<https://www.headspace.com/covid-19>
- **Mood juice:**  
Self-help podcasts including relaxation exercises.  
<https://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/asppodcast.asp>
- **MoodCafé:**  
Online information and resources related to a range of psychological problems.  
<https://www.moodcafe.co.uk>
- **NHS Inform:**  
Scotland's national health information service which contains online mental health self-health resources.  
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health/anxiety>
- **SAMH:**  
Scottish Association for Mental Health website containing a range of self-help resources.  
[https://www.samh.org.uk/documents/SAMH\\_Understanding\\_Anxiety.pdf](https://www.samh.org.uk/documents/SAMH_Understanding_Anxiety.pdf)
- **Centre for Clinical Interventions (CCI):**  
Online psychology website containing a range of self-help materials and resources.  
<https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Anxiety>
- **Wellbeing Glasgow:**

**Glasgow South Primary Care Mental Health Team website containing a range of self-help and psychoeducational materials including booklets and videos.**

<http://wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/anxiety-2/>

- **Mind:**

**A Mental Health Charity providing free online guides to support and services on arrange of topics as well as information on mental health problems.**

<https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/2963/anxiety-2017.pdf>

- **Heads Up:**

**An online resource for people with mental health problems or people caring for them; provides mental health advice and information on common mental health difficulties.**

<http://www.headsup.scot/mental-health-conditions/depression-anxiety/>

- **Video of Dr Russ Harris (Author of the Happiness Trap) advises on an ACT (Acceptance and commitment therapy) approach to coping with the coronavirus.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmvNCdpHUYM>

- **Video by Psychologist Jo Hemmings on coping with fears of isolation**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2020/mar/19/coronavirus-how-to-cope-with-anxiety-and-self-isolation-video-explainer>

## **COVID-19 Outbreak: Coping with Social Isolation and/or Loneliness**

### **Feeling Socially Isolated and/or Lonely?**

Loneliness and social isolation are different but related concepts. Social isolation refers to the objective physical separation from other people (e.g. living alone), while loneliness refers to the subjective distressed feeling of being alone or separated. Social isolation can lead to loneliness; and loneliness can lead to social isolation. Both may also occur at the same time. People can experience different levels of social isolation and loneliness over their lifetime, moving in and out of these states as their personal circumstances change. There are many factors which may contribute to social isolation and/or loneliness including deteriorating health, loss of a friend or loved one, retirement and loss of the social contact and enjoyment associated with work, loss of role, and sensory and mobility impairments. Whatever the cause, social isolation and loneliness are serious issues and can contribute to a decline in physical and mental wellbeing.

Loneliness is not the same as depression, but loneliness can sometimes lead to depression, and depression can sometimes lead to loneliness. If we feel sad or unmotivated, we are less likely to make contact with friends or family. In this case, depression can then cause feelings of loneliness to continue.

As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are currently required to follow stringent social distancing measures making it harder for people to maintain their social connections. This reduction in social contact is likely going to negatively affect populations that are most vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness, including older adults. If you are feeling lonely, it's important to remember that you're not alone. It's normal to feel stress when faced with staying indoors and interacting less with people, especially when that is added to the underlying stress of worrying whether you will catch the virus. Many of us will miss seeing family and friends, and taking part in our usual hobbies, interests, and activities. Given that we are unable to go places or interact socially with many people at this time, you may wonder what you can do. This self-help guide contains some information on what you can do and who you can contact if you're feeling socially isolated and/or lonely during these times.

## How Can I Manage Social Isolation and/or Loneliness?

There are many strategies that you can employ to manage social isolation and/or loneliness at this time, and to ensure you maintain your physical and mental wellbeing. Most of these involve either finding ways to distract yourself or to connect with others, despite the circumstances.

### ***Engage in Meaningful Activity***

One of the contributors to feelings of loneliness can be losing a sense of meaning. If you are finding that you feel not just bored, but also as though you are losing your sense of self, then a loss of meaning might be affecting you. We all want to feel like we belong and that our life has importance which is why incorporating meaningful activities into each day is important. Doing something meaningful each day even if only for a short period, will give you a sense of purpose and identity. Only you will know what will create meaning in your own life but here are some ideas to get you started:

- Writing projects (e.g. practice writing in a journal each day; start a daily blog journaling your experiences for others to read; creative writing such as poetry, short stories or the novel you've always wanted to write).
- Art projects (e.g. paint by number projects; needlework, knitting or crochet; compile a photo album; adult colouring book).
- Home projects (e.g. choose a room in your home to redecorate or redesign; organise or rearrange paperwork or clothes).
- Reading (e.g. read a book you've always wanted to read; re-read some of your favourite childhood books; read magazines on topics that interest you; listen to audiobooks through services like Audible or Listening Books if you struggle to read or have vision problems).

#### ***Audible:***

[https://www.audible.co.uk/?source\\_code=M2M30DFT1Bk12108131902C5&&ipRedirectOverride=true](https://www.audible.co.uk/?source_code=M2M30DFT1Bk12108131902C5&&ipRedirectOverride=true)

#### ***Listening Books:***

[https://www.listening-books.org.uk/streaming.aspx?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI9aCC5bvZ6AlVQofVCh1CIQB4EAAYAiAAEgK2S\\_D\\_BwE](https://www.listening-books.org.uk/streaming.aspx?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI9aCC5bvZ6AlVQofVCh1CIQB4EAAYAiAAEgK2S_D_BwE)

- Watching TV/Movies (e.g. watch TED talks on YouTube about topics that interest you; watch a series of movies on a theme (comedy movies may help to ease your stress); watch a television series on Netflix; watch documentaries on topics you've wanted to catch up on; listen to podcasts on topics you like).
- Creating or listening to music (e.g. create a playlist of happy songs to listen to; play an instrument such as the piano or guitar; listen to your favourite songs from years gone by through Memory Radio).

***Memory Radio:***

<https://musicmemories.bbcrewind.co.uk>

- Playing games (e.g. sudoku, crossword puzzles, solitaire, online chess).

### **Connect with Others**

Perhaps the best thing you can do to combat loneliness during this period of isolation is to connect with others in non-traditional ways. While you may not be able to visit with family and friends in person, that does not mean that you cannot connect. When you feel lonely it can be tempting to think nobody would want to hear from you but often you'll find people do! Talking to people is a great way to relive old memories and remind you of all the positive things in your life. Here are some ideas:

- Having a chat with a friend or relative over the phone can be the next best thing to being with them. Try to arrange to speak with a friend or family member via telephone on a regular schedule. Ask for help when you need it and be specific about how others can help.
- Stay in touch by texting or instant messenger.
- Age UK runs a telephone befriending service, Call in Time, which allows you to sign up for a free weekly friendship call. It can be a great way to speak to someone new. Call Age UK on **0800 055 6112** to find out more.
- Connect to others using technology. You can share emails and photos with family and friends, have free video chats using services such as Skype or Face Time, and make new online friends or reconnect with old friends on social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter.

### ***How to connect with technology:***

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet/activities-and-events/social-isolation-links-pagee/>

- A tablet computer can be especially useful if you can't get around easily as you can sit with it on your knee or close to hand, and the screen is clear and bright. A sponge-tip stylus pen or speech recognition may help if the touchscreen is difficult for arthritic hands or fingers with poor circulation.
- If you don't currently have access to a computer it might be worth considering this in the future. Local branches of Age UK run classes in computing to help older people get to grips with smartphones, tablet computers and email. Libraries and community centres also often hold regular training courses for older people to learn basic computer skills. These will be available to access again when social distancing measures have been lifted.

### ***Find Sources of Comfort***

Finding ways to give yourself comfort even when you are feeling lonely can help to improve your mental health. Below are some ideas of "comfort measures" that you can take even if you are alone.

- Give yourself a foot massage or use a foot spa.
- Take a bath.
- Focus on your pet(s) if you have them.
- Cook healthy comfort food.
- Have a cup of herbal tea to help you to relax.
- Light scented candles.
- Practice good sleep habits to ensure you are getting enough rest.

Advice about good sleep habits can be found at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-to-get-to-sleep/>

- Try to do some physical activity. This may be walking in the garden or doing some exercises indoors.

***Simple physical exercises to do at home:***

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/exercise/simple-exercises-inactive-adults/>

- Practice self-compassion. If you find yourself saying things like "I shouldn't be feeling this way" or pushing away difficult emotions, this will only make your loneliness persist. Instead of resisting your feelings, accept them - it's okay to feel the way you do.
- Keep to a schedule. Even if you are isolated at home, try to keep to a regular schedule as much as possible. While loneliness can feel like it will never end, trying to make these days feel as 'normal' as possible can help you to get through these difficult times. Start each day with a plan of a few things that you will do, and keep a daily diary about how you are feeling and what you are doing. All of these tracking systems will help you feel like you are being proactive about the situation.

### ***Plan for the Future***

While it might feel like this loneliness will last forever, there will come a time that you'll be back to your usual routines. One way to feel less alone now is to make plans for the future or do things that help you to focus on the future. Below are some ideas.

- Make a 'future list' of all the things you want to do.
- Plant some spring bulbs that you can buy and order from online websites.
- Plan a fun event for when you are out of isolation.
- Make a 'goals' list for some area of your life.

### **Where Can I Access Further Information?**

**Mind:**

***A Mental Health Charity providing free online guides to support and services on arrange of topics as well as information on mental health problems.***

<https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/3124/loneliness-2019.pdf>

**NHS:**

***A website containing self-help information and information for carers in relation to physical and mental health and wellbeing.***

**Self-help:**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/loneliness-in-older-people/>

***Information for carers on how to help an older adult who is lonely or socially isolated:***

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/loneliness-in-the-elderly-how-to-help/>

**Age UK:**

***A charity for older people providing free online information and advice on a range of topics including health and wellbeing, money matters, legal and family issues, and help and support.***

**Self-help:**

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/loneliness/how-to-overcome-loneliness/>

***Information for carers on how to help an older adult who is lonely or socially isolated:***

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/loneliness/caring-for-someone-whos-lonely/>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/latest-news/2020/march/tackling-loneliness-during-covid-19-outbreak/>

**MindEd:**

***An online service offering mental health advice for older people and those who care for them.***

<https://www.minded.org.uk/LearningContent/LaunchForGuestAccess/609845>

**Stroke Association:**

***Support and resources for those who have experienced a stroke.***

<https://www.stroke.org.uk/finding-support/managing-loneliness-and-isolation>

## Low Mood

We all feel low from time to time and especially if we are going through difficult times. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak many people will experience changes to their lifestyle, daily routine and service provision. We are currently asked to stay home, practice social distancing and only go out when absolutely essential. Day services and social groups that offer meaningful occupation to older adults have suspended their services and the social distancing rules are making it harder for people to keep in touch with their loved ones and social networks. It is normal to experience low mood during this difficult time. This guide provides some information on useful services, websites and self-help resources that could help you if you are experiencing low mood.

### ***Useful Websites & Self-help resources:***

- Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH): Website with a range of information and self-help resources on various mental health problems, including, low mood and depression: [Here](#)
- Age UK: Charity providing information and advice on a variety of topics including money and legal matters, mental health and wellbeing, care and support and travel and hobbies.  
Depression and anxiety: [Here](#)  
Tips for boosting low mood: [Here](#)  
Mental Wellbeing: [Here](#)
- Centre for Clinical Interventions (CCI): Online psychology website providing free resources with general information about various mental health problems: [Here](#)  
Low mood resources: [Here](#)
- Psychology Tools: Online self-help resources related to different mental health problems, including, low mood and depression: [Here](#)
- NHS Inform: Scotland's national health information service which contains online mental health self-health resources: [Here](#)
- Wellbeing Glasgow: Website offering a variety of self-help materials that are free to download: [Here](#)
- Heads Up: Website offering advice and information on different mental health problems: [Here](#)

### ***Mental Health Apps:***

- NHS approved mental health apps: These tools have been assessed by the NHS and are considered safe to use: [Here](#)
- Headspace: Mindfulness app: [Here](#)

***Telephone Support Lines:***

- [Silver Line Scotland:](#) Free confidential telephone helpline offering information, friendship and advice to older people - 0800 470 80 90 (24 hours).
- [Breathing Space:](#) Free confidential telephone service - 0800 83 85 87 (evenings and weekends).
- [Samaritans:](#) Free confidential telephone service - 01698 429411 or 116 123 (24hrs).
- [Age UK:](#) Call in Time is a free telephone friendship service for people 60 and over. Call Age UK on 0800 055 6112 for more information.



# COVID-19 APPROVED GUIDANCE

## OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

***Note: This guidance has been fast-tracked for approval for use within NHSGGC***

### **Covid-19 Resources to support Psychological First Aid with Older People**

This guidance is intended to assist healthcare professionals in the choice of disease-specific treatments.

Clinical judgement should be exercised on the applicability of any guidance, influenced by individual patient characteristics. Clinicians should be mindful of the potential for harmful polypharmacy and increased susceptibility to adverse drug reactions in patients with multiple morbidities or frailty.

If, after discussion with the patient or carer, there are good reasons for not following guidance, it is good practice to record these and communicate them to others involved in the care of the patient.

<b>Version Number:</b>	2
<b>Does this version include changes to clinical advice:</b>	No
<b>Date Approved:</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
<b>Approval Group:</b>	Covid-19 Tactical Group (HSCPs)

#### **Important Note:**

The version of this document on the Clinical Guideline Directory is the only version that is maintained. Any printed copies should therefore be viewed as 'Uncontrolled' and as such, may not necessarily contain the latest updates and amendments.