

THE WELLBEING SERVICE IS OPEN AND HERE TO SUPPORT YOU WITH ANY DIFFICULTIES CREATED BY THE CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS

You can call us on 01782 711651 or self-refer online, and we will be able to provide treatment and support via telephone or on-line video calls. We are not able to deliver face-to-face appointments at the moment in our clinics, but telephone and online appointments are just as effective, and can be more frequent and convenient for you.

This is a worrying time, so we are here to support you with any anxieties or difficulties you may be experiencing as a result of the coronavirus restrictions (or any other emotional & physical health problem).

ADVICE ON MANAGING YOUR WELLBEING –

Anxiety and News Stories

The news media will only focus on the negative and anxiety provoking aspects of the pandemic for now. Their role is to convey what is happening at a population level – this is very different to the risk to you at an individual level. The media will continue to report a rising number of deaths, which can be anxiety-provoking. However, some figures may help you to put this into perspective - There are over 66 million people in the UK. The government's strategy (the current restrictions) aims to limit deaths from coronavirus to around 20,000 over a year. Even if the number of deaths rises above this, it means the overall risk to individuals of catching and dying from coronavirus is very small.

Try to limit the amount of time you spend listening to/watching the News – If you want to keep up to date on a daily basis, we suggest one news report in the morning and one in the evening from a reputable source (e.g the BBC news). Do not read online news stories, as these often contain false information.

Increased Health Anxiety

Hearing that coronavirus affects the respiratory system (our throat and airways) has increased many people's focus on their breathing, chest and throat. When this happens it means we tend to notice normal symptoms more, and are more likely to think they are signs of coronavirus. (e.g. passing symptoms such as a tickly throat, a cough or slight breathlessness, what we would usually ignore). People can then become anxious over these symptoms, think it's coronavirus and feel panic.

How can I tell if it's just my anxiety over a normal symptom? – Try distracting yourself with an activity, or a relaxation exercise where you practice breathing using your abdomen (this is often called Diaphragmatic Breathing). The self-help section of our website has instructions on this, or you can find video demonstrations on YouTube. If this lessens your symptoms then that's good evidence that it's anxiety, as symptoms of viral infection would continue regardless of what you were doing.

How can I tell if ongoing symptoms might be coronavirus? – We all get symptoms of common viral infections quite often, and our throats/airways are the places where these infections are usually fought off by our immune systems. If you get cold/flu like symptoms where there is mucus (e.g. blocked or runny nose, sneezing, a cough that produces mucus in your throat), a sore throat and a headache, this is very unlikely to be coronavirus. The symptoms of coronavirus are a high temperature (fever), and a continuous dry cough over days (no mucus). Even if you think you have these symptoms there is no need to panic – hundreds of thousands of people have had coronavirus and recovered (and will now have immunity). The UK government's chief medical advisor, Professor Chris Whitty, says even though the risks at a population level are higher for older people, "the great majority of older people will have a mild or moderate disease". We should all be self-isolating anyway, so keep yourself mentally distracted with activities, rest, drink regular fluids and eat well. This will all help your immune system. If your symptoms don't improve after a week and you feel they are getting worse, call 111.

Effects of isolation – managing my mood

We are not used to staying at home, either alone or with others, so we have compiled some tips to help manage your wellbeing during isolation –

1. Set a schedule for each day – Get up at a set time, get washed and dressed, set times for meals. Divide the day into units of time (e.g. 30 mins or an hour), and plan/schedule your activities into these times.
2. Do things more slowly, take your time over things and try to do one thing at a time. There is nothing to rush for at the moment.
3. Take advantage of extra time at home to start/try a new activity/project that you may have previously thought of, but have never had time to get round to it. It can be anything.
4. Schedule exercise into your day and always spend some time outside (e.g. make the most of your permitted daily exercise outside)
5. Reach out to others – If you are not familiar with any social media or online platforms, take the time to join, learn, try them out. Send messages and join/set up groups. Join community groups, ask neighbours if there is anything you can do/get for them.
6. If you are isolating with others in your household/family – Practice being kind to each other, designate specific spaces/rooms for people at specific times of the day so you can keep some boundaries, plan your schedule together, including cooking, mealtimes and chores. If sharing any devices - designate specific times for each person.
7. You may need to ease/relax some of the rules you have previously had for a normal daily routine – this is ok, it's not a normal time. You can resume normal rules when restrictions are lifted and we can all get out again.