

How to protect your mental health during Coronavirus

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Coronavirus has plunged the world into a constant stream of news and fear. For many people, this can make existing mental health issues worse.

Outside of the physical wellbeing advice to regularly wash our hands with soap, self-isolating for 14 days if we, or someone in our house has a fever or a persistent cough, or self-isolating on arrival to the Island, there are ways we can also protect our mental health.

Here are some simple steps which can help us all:

My wellbeing

Being concerned about the effects of the outbreak is entirely understandable. For some people it can act as a trigger for mental health issues. If this is something you're struggling with then the following may help:

- Limit the news and be careful about what you read, particularly if it doesn't make you feel better. (Last night I didn't look at any news all night and I felt so much lighter as I headed to bed.)
- Stick to trusted sources of information such as [WHO](#), [Public Health Isle of Man](#) and [UK](#). Facts minimise fear.
- Have a break from social media, mute anything which act as triggers. Follow positive and hopeful stories. Shift your narrative to the number of recoveries rather than the number of deaths.
- Stay connected with people through technology
- Access nature and sunlight. The Isle of Man has plenty of open space where you don't have to come into contact with anyone else
- If this is something you are really struggling with then contact your [GP](#)

My colleague's/friend's wellbeing

- If you notice a colleague struggling, ask how they are and if you can help
- Listen if they want to talk
- If you feel they need professional support, direct them to [their GP](#)

My Community

Be empathetic to people who are self-isolating and offer to help where you can.

- Check-in by phone on neighbours or people in your community who may need some extra assistance. Working together as one community can help to create solidarity in addressing this together.

- Offer assistance by volunteering with the [Isle of Man Coronavirus Community Support](#) project

If I have to work from home or self-isolate

Stay connected and maintain your social networks. Even when isolated, try as much as possible to keep your personal daily routines or create new routines.

- Engage in healthy activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy food. Keep things in perspective.
- Mental health charity 'Mind' have a [useful plan](#) if you have to stay at home or indoors for a prolonged period
- [Five ways to work well from home](#) is a useful list from the BBC

It's hard to know what will happen in the coming days and weeks but fear and anxiety will likely increase as our lives continue to be disrupted and put on hold. As a community, we should work together with a sense of empathy. As individuals, we must inform ourselves of the facts, stay connected to the people we love and be kind to each other.

Further information is also available from [Mental Health Foundation](#)