

# COVID-19 MUTUAL AID

## HIGH WYCOMBE

### HELPING OTHERS

WHO ARE STRUGGLING WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

#### Understanding how to help someone:

About 1 in 4 people experience mental health problems each year. Most of us know a friend, colleague or family member who has struggled with their mental health. We can all feel anxious, stressed or low at times in our lives. When these feelings go on for a long time, get worse or affect our day-to-day lives, they may be considered a problem. If you know someone who is struggling to sleep or having issues with their mental health, there are lots of things you can do.

#### Top things you can do to help:

##### Express concern and say you can help



Letting someone know you're worried is a good way to open up a conversation – it shows you care about the person, have time for them and that they do not have to avoid things with you.



##### Reassure them

The first time someone mentions their worries is a big step. It's good to recognise this and reassure them. Let them know you're there to listen when they need to talk.

##### Offer your time to listen



Listening is an important skill. Ask open questions that start with "how", "what", "where" or "when". This can help people open up.



##### Be patient

You will not always know the full story. There may be reasons why they have found it difficult to ask for help. Just being there can be helpful for someone who may want to open up later.

##### Do not force it



Do not force someone to talk to you or get help, and do not go to a doctor on their behalf. This may lead to them feeling uncomfortable, with less power and less able to speak for themselves.



##### Look after yourself

Look after yourself. It can be upsetting to hear someone you care about in distress. Be kind to yourself and take some time to relax or do something you enjoy.

# 10 TIPS TO HELP IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT CORONAVIRUS



## 1 STAY CONNECTED WITH OTHERS

Maintaining healthy relationships with people we trust is important for our mental well-being, so think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family while needing to stay at home. You could try phone calls, video calls or social media instead of meeting in person – whether it's with people you normally see often or connecting with old friends.

## 2 TALK ABOUT YOUR WORRIES

It's normal to feel a bit worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember: it is OK to share your concerns with others you trust – and doing so may help them too. If you cannot speak to someone you know or if doing so has not helped, there are plenty of helplines you can try instead.

## 3 SUPPORT AND HELP OTHERS

Helping someone else can benefit you as well as them, so try to be a little more understanding of other people's concerns, worries or behaviours at this time. Try to think of things you can do to help those around you. Is there a friend or family member nearby you could message? Are there any community groups you could join to support others locally? Remember, it is important to do this in line with official coronavirus guidance to keep everyone safe.

## 4 FEEL PREPARED

Working through the implications of staying at home should help you feel more prepared and less concerned. Think through a normal week: how will it be affected and what do you need to do to solve any problems? If you have not already, you might want to talk with your employer, understand your sick pay and benefits rights, and get hold of some essentials for while you are at home.

## 5 LOOK AFTER YOUR BODY

Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly. Avoid smoking or drugs, and try not to drink too much alcohol. You can leave your house, alone or with members of your household, for 1 form of exercise a day – like a walk, run or bike ride. But make you keep a safe 2-metre distance from others.

## **6 STICK TO THE FACTS**

Find a credible source you can trust – such as GOV.UK or the NHS website (nhs.uk) – and fact-check information you get from newsfeeds, social media or other people. You could also use the GOV.UK Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp. This automated chatbot covers the most common questions about coronavirus. Message the coronavirus chatbot on 07860 064422 to get started. Think about how possibly inaccurate information could affect others too. Try not to share information without fact-checking against credible sources. You might also want to consider limiting the time you spend watching, reading or listening to coverage of the outbreak, including on social media, and think about turning off breaking-news alerts on your phone.

## **7 STAY ON TOP OF DIFFICULT FEELINGS**

Concern about the coronavirus outbreak is perfectly normal. However, some people may experience intense anxiety that can affect their daily life. Try to focus on the things you can control, such as your behaviour, who you speak to, and where and how often you get information. It's fine to acknowledge that some things are outside of your control, but if constant thoughts about coronavirus are making you feel anxious or overwhelmed, try some ideas to help manage your anxiety (found on <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/anxiety>) or listening to an audio guide.

## **8 DO THINGS YOU ENJOY**

If we are feeling worried, anxious or low, we might stop doing things we usually enjoy. Focusing on your favourite hobby, relaxing indoors or connecting with others can help with anxious thoughts and feelings. If you cannot do the things you normally enjoy because you are staying at home, think about how you could adapt them, or try something new. There are lots of free tutorials and courses online, and people are coming up with inventive new ways to do things, like hosting online pub quizzes and music concerts.

## **9 FOCUS ON THE PRESENT**

Focusing on the present, rather than worrying about the future, can help with difficult emotions and improve our wellbeing. Relaxation techniques (that can be found on <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness>) can also help some people deal with feelings of anxiety, or you could try our mindful breathing video.

## **10 LOOK AFTER YOUR SLEEP**

Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel mentally and physically, so it is important to get enough. Try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep up good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment.

# WHERE TO FIND HELP

## GP SURGERIES

The advice and support of a GP should be sought as the first priority for anyone struggling with their mental health. A GP can assess your situation, prescribe if necessary and refer you on to local services for further treatment. Though not physically accepting patients under lockdown, GPs are still offering telephone appointments, and can treat and monitor conditions remotely.



## NHS SUPPORT

The **NHS website** has a number of mental health resources. Mental health helplines are listed at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/)

Advice and signposting for emergency situations needing an urgent response can be found at [www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/dealing-with-a-mental-health-crisis-or-emergency/](http://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/dealing-with-a-mental-health-crisis-or-emergency/)

For urgent mental health support, contact their 24 hour support line:  
[www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline](http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline).



## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE MIND

**Buckinghamshire Mind** is a local mental health charity, working with national charity **Mind** ([www.mind.org.uk/](http://www.mind.org.uk/)) to provide support and specific local signposting. Their website offers good advice to help people manage during coronavirus: [www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/)

**Bucks Mind** also provides an out-of-hours, non-clinical crisis support service called **Safe Haven** ([www.bucksmind.org.uk/services/safe-haven/](http://www.bucksmind.org.uk/services/safe-haven/)). They offer one-to-one, 30 minute phone calls from 6pm onwards, seven nights a week for mental health support and signposting. Calls to be made no later than 11pm. To contact the service Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, please call **01296 453017**. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, call **01494 218098**.

## HEALTH MINDS BUCKS

**Healthy Minds Bucks** is an NHS service providing free psychological therapies for mental health conditions. These are available remotely through an online portal or through telephone appointments. They accept self-referrals through their website ([www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/healthyminds/](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/healthyminds/)), referrals from a GP or health professional, calls at **01865 901600** (Monday to Thursday 7am-5:30pm, Friday 7am-5pm) or texts by texting **TALK** and your name to **07798 667169**.



## OXFORD HEALTH NHS 24/7 MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINE

The **Oxford Health NHS 24/7 Mental Health Helpline** has also been launched to take pressure off **111** for mental health advice in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The round-the-clock helpline will make it quicker and easier to get the right advice. Adults should call **01865 904997**, children and young people should call **01865 904998**.

More information can be found on [www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/news/24-7-mental-health-helpline-for-buckinghamshire-oxfordshire](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/news/24-7-mental-health-helpline-for-buckinghamshire-oxfordshire)



## CAMHS: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

### **CAMHS: Buckinghamshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service**

can be contacted on **01865 901951** (Monday to Friday; 8am to 6pm) or by email on [oxfordhealth.bucksCAMHSSPA@nhs.net](mailto:oxfordhealth.bucksCAMHSSPA@nhs.net)



## THE SAMARITANS

The **Samaritans** ([www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)) run a **free** 24/7 mental help helpline. To contact them, please call **116 123**

# ADDITIONAL USEFUL LINKS AND APPS

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE:

The **Oxfordshire Health NHS** website has some resources to help people manage with specific concerns during COVID-19 which can be found here:

**[www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus/covid/](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus/covid/)**



There are resources to support you with the following topics:

Worry: **[www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus/covid/worry/](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus/covid/worry/)**

Wellbeing: **[www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus/covid/wellbeing/](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus/covid/wellbeing/)**

Social Isolation: **[www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus/covid/social-isolation/](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus/covid/social-isolation/)**

## APPS THAT CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE APP STORE AND GOOGLE PLAY:

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

<https://calmharm.co.uk/>

<https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay-alive-app/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/active10/home>

