



Wellbeing Guide

How to stay emotionally well during isolation





How are you?

It's hard not to feel a little worried or anxious right now. There are a lot of scary stories on the news and social media. Everything seems confused and upside down. Supermarkets are empty, cafes and shops are closed. Everything is different.

At times like this, it is important to take a step back and refocus. At the Wave Project, we try to help young people do this all the time. By focusing on the sea or surfing, they take a step away from the whirlwind of thoughts and worries constantly going through their heads. By supporting each other, our surfers feel reassured.

By setting themselves a challenge, they become more confident. All this helps them deal with a crisis.

We can't deliver our surf therapy courses at the moment, so instead what we have done is written this short guidebook to help you to be in a more positive mental place at this time of crisis. We have put together some practical tips and resources that may help you cope. To be clear, we are not medical experts and this is not a guidebook about avoiding getting ill. It's about staying positive and mentally well for the duration of this situation.

Let's start to feel better

This is a scary situation for lots of reasons. But the first thing to keep in mind is that it is not anyone's fault. You may disagree with how the crisis is being handled, but getting angry and blaming people does not help. All it does is feeds into a cycle of negative emotion, that leads to you feeling more scared. So let's park the blame for a minute.

Feeling scared? That's ok

When we're scared, our brains start to function in a different way. We become less logical and more emotional. We find it harder to plan carefully, and become more reactive. We can't see the bigger picture. Instead we respond to how we're feeling *this very second*.

So let's take a step back. Accept that we're feeling a bit more scared than usual right now. That's ok.

And because we're feeling a bit more scared, we might do things we wouldn't normally do. For example, we might get cross with people more easily – especially the people closest to us. When we're thinking calmly, we know that's not ok. But our scared mind doesn't think calmly. So we have to remind it to calm down.

Let's accept that we're scared, and so are other people. Like us, they may be a bit less calm than usual. Be forgiving. Don't react to the fear. Park the blame. We must try to be kind.

Let's be kind

When you're feeling scared the hardest thing to do is be kind. But it is the best thing to do. Why? Because kindness helps you feel calmer. And when you're calmer, you think more rationally. When you think more rationally, you're calmer. See how it works?

At the Wave Project, we try to encourage our young surfers to accept their fears. By taking them into the waves, they start to assess how far they want to go. We only take them that far. When they're ready, they might go a bit further – overcoming their previous fear.

None of that would be possible if they were on their own. But because they have a surf mentor standing next to them, they feel reassured.

It's the same with this situation. By being kind to others, we reassure them. They feel calmer and we feel calmer. Together we overcome our fears. And although the problem doesn't go away, we can go into it together. Like swimming out into big waves, it's easier if someone is there alongside you.



Be kind to yourself

It's easy to feel anxious, bored or frustrated whilst self-isolating.

Here are some tips to help you out:



Enjoy what there is. This is a wonderful opportunity to slow everything right down. Take your time and enjoy very simple things. Do one of those jobs that you always meant to get done but didn't have the time. Or try a new hobby that you always planned to start.



Stay positive. If you're feeling low or worried, try to think about the good things you have. Be grateful.



Avoid envy. This is the most toxic emotion, so avoid it like – well, like coronavirus itself! If someone has something you want, try to feel happy for them. It's better for you if you do.



Find something to laugh about. Laughter zaps depression and releases healing endorphins. If you can, re-watch your favourite comedy show.



Physical contact is important to good wellbeing, so make sure you show affection to your close family members. Dogs and cats make great substitutes – show them a little love.



Exercise. Every day. Even if it is only for ten minutes. This is so important to maintaining good wellbeing. See the resources section for a few more tips.



Treat yourself. If you can't have that lunchtime glass of wine or that candlelit bath now – when can you? Whatever your treat is, make sure you enjoy it guilt free.



Finally, remember this is not forever. This is an emergency response to an unknown threat. Things will get better.

Be kind to others

It can be hard to think of others when you're feeling stressed yourself. But it's important to do so – not just for their wellbeing, but for yours.



Avoid blame. We may all want someone to blame as a way of offloading our anger and frustration, but that isn't a good idea. Blaming others – especially on social media – simply fuels the flames of our own anger. Don't go there.



Ask people how they are doing. A simple 'How are you?' can make a massive difference to someone's day. You can do this at home, in the supermarket, or online. Why not ask the person delivering the post? It'll probably make their day.



Renew some old friendships. Get back in touch with someone you haven't spoken to for a while, because – yep – you've been too busy. They are probably at home too and will be only too glad to hear from you.



Ask for help, if you need it. There's no shame in telling your friends or family that you are feeling down or panicky. It's the right thing to do. No one will judge you.



Contact a friend or family member who might be vulnerable. Ask them how they are. Hearing from you will be a huge boost for them. It will be good for you too.



Just be kind. Kindness will keep you going. It's the most important thing you can do right now, both for yourself, and to help the crisis. It sounds simplistic to say 'keep smiling', but that's what we all have to try to do.



Helpful Resources

Exercise

thebodycoach.com/blog/pe-with-joe-1254.html
Lessons from Joe Wicks to keep active and fit

facebook.com/groups/208359916894796
Stay at home football coaching

cosmickids.com
Fun yoga activities for you to do with your kids

Home Learning

oxfordowl.co.uk/
An amazing selection of E-Books and ideas for reading activities

teachyourmonstertoread.com/
A brilliant App that encourages early reading skills through games and fun activities.

twinkl.co.uk/
Lots of printable resources suitable for all ages.
Free subscription for the next month.

bbc.co.uk/programmes/p007g5y4
BBC Schools radio - a series of programmes covering music, dance, drama, songs etc.

classroomsecrets.co.uk/
Really lovely English and Maths resources for all ages including educational video clips and printables. Free subscription for at least the next month.

Self-care

wiki-how.com/Practice-Hygge
Find out about the Danish art of self-care

nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/
An in-depth explanation of what mindfulness means and how to be more mindful

blurtitout.org/2017/05/23/a-z-self-care/
The A-Z of self-care by mental health charity Blurt

Fun and Games

waveproject.co.uk
Visit our homepage to download weekly activity packs filled with games, recipes, experiments and many more!

rnli.org/youth-education/education-resources/activity-sheets-and-posters
Visit RNLI's resources page for more activities for children

maketecheasier.com/museums-with-free-virtual-tours/
Virtual museums - Links to 5 museums that do virtual tours.



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