



Are you OK?

**COVID-19 is having an
impact on everyone's
daily lives**

Tips to help you take
care of your mind as
well as your body



In these uncertain times it's important to take care of your mind as well as your body, and to make sure you get any support that you need.

By staying at home as much as possible, you are helping to protect yourself and your community from the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). As a result, you may feel isolated, worried and anxious, or you could be concerned about your health, or the health of others. This is normal.

We are living in extraordinary times. Just remember: we are all in this together.

Cllr Alev Cazimoglu
Cabinet member for Health
and Social Care





Plan how you'll spend your time

It might help to write this down on paper and put it on the wall what you plan to do each day.

Try to follow your ordinary routine as much as possible. Get up at the same time as normal, follow your usual morning routines, and go to bed at your usual time. Set alarms to remind you of your schedule if that helps.

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly. Avoid smoking and drugs. Try not to drink too much alcohol.

Stay connected with current events, but if news stories make you feel anxious or confused, think about switching off or limiting what you look at for a while.

Social media could help you stay in touch with people but might also make you feel anxious, including if people are sharing news stories or posting about their worries. Consider taking a break from using social media.

If you aren't happy with your usual routine, this might be a chance to do things differently. For example, you could go to bed earlier, spend more time cooking or do other things you don't usually have time for.





It's important to remember that everyone reacts differently. You may be enjoying the opportunity to be alone. You may feel bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also be low, worried or anxious, or concerned about your finances, your health or those close to you.

It is okay to feel this way. Remember, this situation is temporary and, for most of us, these feelings will pass.

If you are feeling claustrophobic or trapped

Regularly change the rooms you spend time in. Open the windows to let in fresh air. Or you could spend time sitting looking up at the sky from your doorstep, or in the garden if you have one.

Look after your sleep

Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel, so it's important to get enough. Try to maintain your regular sleeping pattern and stick to good sleep practices.

There are five things we can all do to improve our emotional, mental health and wellbeing:

-  Connect
-  Stay Active
-  Keep Learning
-  Take Notice
-  Give





Remember: it is okay to share your concerns with others you trust. Lots of people are finding the current situation difficult, so staying in touch could help them too.

Connect

Maintaining healthy relationships with people you trust is important for your mental wellbeing. Think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family while you are all staying at home - by phone, messaging, video calls or social media - whether it's people you usually see often or connecting with old friends.

If you're worried that you might run out of stuff to talk about, make a plan with someone to watch a show or read a book separately so that you can discuss it when you contact each other.

It's normal to feel a bit worried about the current situation.

If you are worried about loneliness

Think about things you can do to connect with people. For example, putting extra pictures up of the people you care about might be a nice reminder of the people in your life.

Listen to a chatty radio station or podcast if your home feels too quiet.





Stay Active

Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. Physical activity is associated with a 20% reduction in mental health issues.

You can leave your house, alone or with members of your household to exercise, but make sure you keep a safe 2-metre distance from others. One of the results of the lockdown has been a reduction in air-pollution. Take advantage of this while it lasts!

In Enfield we are very fortunate to have lots of green spaces,

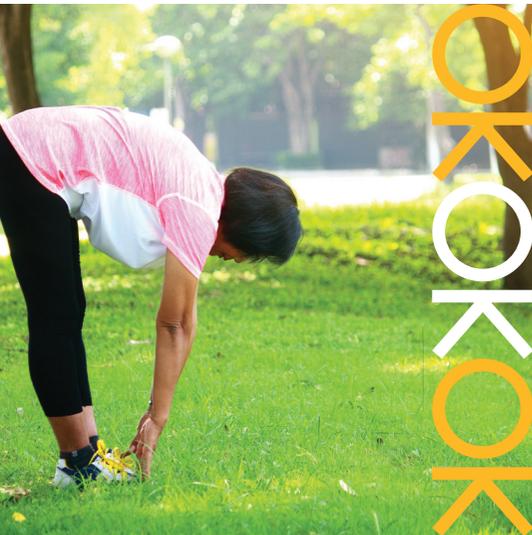
throughout our Borough. Choose a number of different routes for walks, runs, bike rides or other forms of exercise.

If you can't leave your house, then cleaning, gardening, chair-based exercises and even dancing to music, can help to brighten your mood.

Keep learning

Keep your mind active. There are also lots of different ways that you can relax and be creative. Take notice of the present moment and use your creative side. You can: read, play games, do crosswords, complete sudoku puzzles, finish jigsaws, listen to podcasts or watch films, learn new arts and crafts, such as drawing, painting, collage, sewing, craft kits or upcycling, DIY, writing, colouring, playing or learning to play a musical instrument, singing or listening to music.

Whatever it is, find something that works for you.





If you have panic attacks or flashbacks, it might help to plan a 'safe space' in your home that you go to. You can also find ways to comfort yourself if you're feeling anxious. For example, you can distract yourself with games or puzzles. Breathing exercises may help.

Take notice

Mindfulness is an ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us. While outside the house take notice of our surroundings, and not be too focused on our phones. In fact, just leave it in your pocket until you get home. If you take a daily regular walk, reverse your route occasionally and you will notice different sights and scenes.

Relaxation techniques can help with difficult emotions and worries and feelings of anxiety. Yoga, Tai Chi and meditation are all things that can help.

Give

Perhaps you can arrange to help as a volunteer at this time. Spend time talking with friends or relatives who also need your support and company. Ask how they are and spend time to really listen to their answers. Say 'thank you' for something someone has done for you; small gestures go a long way to helping everyone through these times.

mindfulness



Where to go for help

If you are concerned that you need additional help with your mental health please speak with your own GP in the first instance.

You can also contact the local NHS talk line (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) on 020 8702 4900.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and are at risk of harming yourself please contact Barnet Enfield and Haringey's 24/7 Crisis line on 0300 0200 500.

