

Tips for Optimizing your Mental Health during COVID-19

Set a routine.

If you are spending more time at home it is important to continue with a regular routine.

- Maintain a regular time for waking up and going to bed, eating at regular times, and getting ready and dressed each morning.
- You could use a timetable to give structure to your day.

Stay mentally and physically active.

- When you plan your daily timetable, have a go at including activities that keep both your mind and body active. For example, you could try learning something new with an online course, or challenge yourself to learn a new language.
- It's also important to keep physically active. For example doing rigorous housework for 30 minutes, or an online exercise video.

Practice gratitude.

- At times of uncertainty, developing a gratitude practice can help you to connect with moments of joy, aliveness, and pleasure.
- At the end of each day, take time to reflect on what you are thankful for today. Try and be specific and notice new things each day, for example 'I am grateful that it was sunny at lunchtime so I could sit in the garden'.
- You could start a gratitude journal, or keep notes in a gratitude jar. Encourage other people in your home to get involved too.

Notice and limit worry triggers.

- As the health situation develops it can feel like we need to constantly follow the news or check social media for updates. However, you might notice this also triggers your worry and anxiety
- Try to notice what triggers your worry. For example, is it watching the news for more than 30 minutes? Checking social media every hour?
- Try to limit the time that you are exposed to worry triggers each day.
- You might choose to listen to the news at a set time each day, or you could limit the amount of time you spend on social media for news checking.

Rely on reputable news sources.

- It can also help to be mindful of where you are obtaining news and information.
- Be careful to choose reputable sources.
- The World Health Organization provides excellent information here: <https://www.who.int/>