



## Encouraging positive mental wellbeing while we isolate

We are currently experiencing challenging and unprecedented times. Many of you and your children may be finding the challenges associated with self-isolating can put extra pressure on our mental wellbeing. The tips and guidance below are aimed at giving you advice on how best to maintain good mental health for your children during these times.



### **Set routines**

Establish a routine for your children. Children thrive with predictable, consistent routines at home that provide, among other things, a sense of security, and help their social and emotional well-being. This source of stability will be even more critical during what may be a prolonged period without the structure of a normal school day. These kinds of crises can make us feel unmotivated or powerless, and a routine helps us to keep focused and helps us feel like we are in control.

Create family schedules. Simple things like getting dressed instead of lounging around in pyjamas can help to normalise the day.



### **Connect**

Social connection is critical to human survival and self-isolation will mean some children will struggle. Try to think creatively about helping your children to create the time and space to connect.

Set up virtual playdates, a book club with friends or have everyone watch a show and discuss it, however please be vigilant with regards to who they are contacting and what is being said.



### **Be active**

Being active is not only great for your child's physical health and fitness but evidence also shows that it improves their mental wellbeing by raising self-esteem.

If you're lucky enough to have a garden, take advantage of this while we are confined to our houses. Vitamin D found in the sun's natural rays, is known to have positive benefits to our mental health.



### **Keep learning**

Research shows that learning new skills can improve children's wellbeing by

Boosting self-confidence and self-esteem

Helping your child build a sense of purpose

Setting a challenge that your child enjoys achieving

Doing something creative and fun

For example, use this time encourage them to learn how to cook, fix a bike, start a hobby like painting or knitting, learn a language, learn to play an instrument, read a book or write a story.



### Eating well and staying hydrated

Find out about getting food delivered or find out where the local food bank is or you could ask someone else to drop food off for you. Think about your family's diet. Your appetite might change if your routine changes, or if you're less active than you usually are. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can help your mood and energy levels. Drink water regularly. Drinking enough water is important for your

mental and physical health.

### Useful resources/agencies/websites containing information on mental health:

If you do find at any point that either yourself or your children are experiencing elements of poor mental health, the list below provides with a range of resources and services that you may find useful.

Organisation name	Website	Support offered
Young Minds	<a href="http://www.youngminds.org.uk">www.youngminds.org.uk</a>	General guidance and information regarding mental health Specific parent help line Young person's crisis messenger service
Harmless	<a href="http://www.harmless.org.uk">www.harmless.org.uk</a>	Offer online support for young people and families experiencing self-harm concerns.
Kooth	<a href="http://www.kooth.com">www.kooth.com</a>	Online counselling and emotional well-being platform accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop.
Childline	<a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a>	Charity run organisation supporting children's wellbeing
Time to Change	<a href="http://www.time-to-change.org.uk">www.time-to-change.org.uk</a>	Anti-stigma campaign lead by the charity 'Minds'
Anna Freud Centre	<a href="http://www.annafreud.org">www.annafreud.org</a>	Children's mental health charity
Samaritans	<a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a>	24hour support online/phone