

# Coping with change

We are over a month in now and if there was novelty, it has worn off. The reality of daily life is now extremely different from six weeks ago. So what can we do over the coming weeks to make sure we cope as best we can? There are so many things to worry about and so many things we can't control.

If you're feeling the pressure to 'perform', we hope that the ideas below can, in some small way, help to alleviate some of that pressure.

If you spend your days looking at social media, you might be fooled into thinking that if you're not recording a family musical or providing award-winning homeschooling, then you're somehow a failure.

## Well, you're not.

You are doing what we all are doing - getting through the day as best you can. Right now we could all use some help: it's so important that we find ways to stay positive and to ride the wave of kindness that has run alongside this terrible situation.

**COVID-19** is a reminder to us all that sometimes things happen that are so far beyond our control that even the most organised or adaptable among us struggle to cope. The real lesson for us all right now, is that it's ok not to be ok.

Whether we like it or not, change is a part of our daily lives now. We can choose to spend this time watching the news or we try and rise, somehow, to the challenge we are all facing and try to learn to change the things about our lives that we never usually have time and space to do. This is not easy, but it might just be worth it.

We hope you can find something useful for you and your family in this booklet, a nudge in the right direction, whatever that direction may be.



## Time

Most of us are at home for longer than we usually are. This time is split into two types:

- 1. Time for you:** This is time where you are free to choose what you do. You aren't currently needed by work or family and you can spend some time doing things that you want to do.
- 2. Time for them:** Whoever 'they' are, this is time given to others. Maybe you're 'at work', or looking after children, homeschooling, or you're taking part in your fifth online quiz of the day!

So, try dividing your day into these two chunks of time:



Most of us wake up in the morning and ask ourselves this question:

**'What do I have to do today?'**

Let's try starting the day by asking a slightly different question:

**'What do I want to do today?'**

By asking this question, we can give ourselves some of the control that has been taken away. Your answer to that question may well not be allowed currently. If what you want is to head to the airport and fly to a beach somewhere, that's not going to happen anytime soon, so we must answer the question within the constraints of now and of our own lives. Answers will depend on money, circumstance, family and, of course, the current situation so be specific to now and to what is possible right now.

**What do you want to do today?**

## 5 things you can do with 'you time'/'them time':

- 1. Do nothing.** Unless you're very lucky or very busy, then most of us have had to manage boredom, or will over the coming weeks - either our own or our children's. The internet is alive with thousands of ways we can kill time. However, maybe we are missing an opportunity to actually do nothing. We spend so much of our lives rushing around and we long for days where we can do nothing. Well, these are those days! If you find yourself with 'nothing' to do, don't be afraid to just do nothing. A valuable life skill for us all to learn (including our children) is the ability to be ok with nothing to do. There may well be huge challenges you are currently facing, besides the obvious. If this applies to you, there's even more reason to give yourself time and space to reflect.



- 2. Write a one-sentence diary.** Many people are using this time to write a diary so that they can look back on this time and recognise the significance. However, if diary writing doesn't sound like something you want to do, try writing a one-sentence diary. At the end of each day, write the date and one sentence. This sentence can be something you've done or something you felt; it can be positive or negative - it's totally up to you.



- 3. No complaints week.** Set yourself a challenge of not complaining for one whole week. So many things that we are used to being able to do we now can't. It's tempting to complain, but you'll soon realise that the people who are usually there to listen to us aren't there. Complaining, much like worrying, doesn't actually do anything and it very often makes us feel worse - especially when we are complaining about things that haven't actually happened yet. If you think you don't complain much, try this for a couple of days; you might be surprised.



- 4. Make an 'everything plan'.** As the title suggests, allocate time for everything you want to do today. Plan your work time, homeschool time, downtime, exercise time - plan it all. Why? Because we are far more likely to feel negatively about things when we don't have anything to do. It's very easy for lockdown days to pass without realising it, or drag on forever. With planning comes a feeling of control. You don't have to stick to the plan and the plan is allowed to change, but having a plan in the first place can help an otherwise daunting day feel manageable. Don't forget to plan to 'do nothing' too.



- 5. Opposite land.** We know what we are, what we like, what scares us, what delights us. Why not use this time to experiment? Many people are using this time to try new hobbies. Why not use this time to actually try and be a new version of you? If you are usually someone that organises everything, try being spontaneous. If you are usually late for everything, try being on time (you can't blame the traffic). If you never read, pick up a book and give it a go. We have the opportunity to do things we wouldn't normally do.



## 5 things you might want to try when you've just had enough - an isolation survival kit:

- 1. Waves.** Since this began, things have come in waves. Waves of fear, waves of kindness, waves of hope, waves of panic. We can't control what the next waves will be, or when they will come, but we can choose whether or not we react to them. Some of the waves we want to join, like clapping the NHS on Thursday nights. Others, we could have done without, like the panic buying wave or the wave of 'advice' via WhatsApp on the latest 'cure' and, of course, there is the daily wave of news. You can choose which wave you ride, or indeed whether you want to ride it at all. Pay attention to how you feel; if something about the latest wave bothers you, remember you have permission not to ride it.



- 2. Just be kind.** Let's keep being kind. Let's keep smiling at people. Let's keep trying to help others. Even if we're scared, even if we feel angry, even if we don't know if it's going to be alright. Maybe kindness is even more important than we thought. Before you do something, ask yourself if it's kind.



- 3. Lists.** Some people write lists for everything, others never do. Either way, try writing a different kind of list. Writing things down really does make us identify how we feel. Here are some ideas of things you could make lists about during lockdown:

- Things you can do now because you have the time
- Things you want to do when life gets back to normal
- Things you want to do in the future
- Things you want to tell people when you next see them in person



- 4. Big questions.** Each of us have our own feelings about what has happened over the past few months. One thing that connects all of us is that none of us really know what will happen next. If you're bored of asking the same questions, and having the same conversations, go big. Here are some ideas for conversation starters:

- What things would you like to go back to normal?
- What do you want to change after this is over?
- What do you want to keep doing after this is over?
- If you were Prime Minister, what would you do?
- If you could choose only one of your possessions to be isolated with, what would you choose?



- 5. Something to look forward to.**

On the days when things feel too much, or you feel out of control or so bored you want to scream, ask yourself a simple question: What am I looking forward to? Choose one thing, that one thing you can't wait to do when this is over.

