

# The Traveller Counselling Service

## **Minding your Mental Health During the Coronavirus Outbreak**

For many Travellers this is very worrying and anxious time that can affect your mental health. Some people will feel more anxious and find it more worrying than others. It is important that we take steps to mind and look after our own mental health and support others to do likewise, hopefully some of the suggestions below will be of some help to people, however you might come up with your own ways of supporting yourself and others during this time. The important thing is that we look after our mental health and support others to do the same and hopefully we will all get through this safely.

### **Some people may notice some of the following:**

- increased anxiety
- feeling stressed
- finding yourself excessively checking for symptoms, in yourself, or others
- becoming irritable more easily
- feeling insecure or unsettled
- fearing that normal aches and pains might be the virus
- having trouble sleeping
- feeling helpless or a lack of control
- having irrational thoughts
- feeling impatient

however, there are many things you can do to mind your mental health and support those around you during these times, for example

Your daily routine will be affected by the virus outbreak in different ways, it is helpful if you can keep some familiar routine in your day

Likewise, it's important to pay attention to your needs and feelings, especially during these times of stress. And you may still be able to do some things you enjoy and find relaxing.

## **Staying Connected**

During times of stress, friends and families can be a good source of support. It is important to keep in touch with them and other people in your life. Even though you're advised to limit your social contact, try to stay connected to people in other ways.

E-mail, social media, video calls or phone calls can help you to stay connected during this time.

Remember that talking things through with someone can help lessen worry or anxiety. You don't have to appear to be strong or to try to cope with things by yourself.

## **Exercise**

You don't have to go to the gym to exercise or keep active.

Regular exercise will help you sleep, relax and feel better, it helps to reduce stress and boosts your energy levels helps protect both your physical and mental health.

Getting out for walk or going for a run for those who are able can be good ways of staying active and fit.

It can also be a good time to get out and play active games with your children, however you need to remember to stay within your own family unit.

## **Relaxing**

Find ways that help you unwind and relax, this will be different for everyone, but some ways might be to

- listening to music
- going for a walk
- yoga
- running
- reading
- watching television of favourite films
- meditation
- looking after horses or other animals
- arts and crafts
- decorating a room

Find something that you enjoy and make an effort to do something relaxing every day.

Even 10 minutes of downtime can help you manage stress better. The more pauses you can build into your day the calmer you'll feel.

It can also help to have a certain place where you go to relax. This can be your bedroom, bathroom, the garden shed or a small corner in the kitchen. It should be somewhere you feel comfortable and secure.

## **Children**

Involving your children in your plans to manage this situation is important. Try to consider how they might be feeling.

Give children and young people the time and space to talk about the outbreak. Share the facts with them in a way that suits their age, without causing alarm.

Talk to your children about coronavirus but try to limit their exposure to news and social media. This is especially important for older children who may be spending more time online now. It may be causing anxiety.

## **Limit your intake of alcohol**

Using alcohol to cope with difficult feelings or problems can create more problems. You may not realise that drinking can affect both your mental and physical health and your relationships with you family. So, it is important that people need to limit the impact this has on themselves and their families. Some of the difficulties that people can experience are

- hazy thinking
- anxiety
- depression
- stress
- family arguments
- conflict
- personality changes

For people who feel they may have a problem with alcohol they can get help with this by contacting the HSE Drugs and Alcohol helpline free phone 1800459459 for confidential information and support

## Maintaining a Healthy diet

It is important to maintain a healthy diet, plan your meals in advance - this will help you to introduce variety and eat more nutritious foods. You'll also save money and rely less on take always, convenience and processed foods.

- Use fresh ingredients and choose foods like fruits, salads and vegetables for snacks.
- Use healthier cooking methods like grilling and steaming instead of frying or roasting with oil or fat.
- Use the time to enjoy your meals sitting down with the family.
- Try to avoid eating in front of TV or computer screens.

## Mental Health Crisis

If someone is in a crisis, it is important that they get help as soon as possible. A mental health crisis often means that a person no longer feels able to cope or be in control of their situation.

they may:

- feel great emotional distress or anxiety
- feel you can't cope with day-to-day life or work
- think about suicide or self-harm
- experience hallucinations and hearing voices.

A crisis can also be the result of an underlying medical condition.

For example, confusion or delusions caused by:

- an infection
- an overdose
- illicit drugs
- intoxication with alcohol.

If you need to talk to someone urgently

you can Call 999 or 112 or The Samaritans 24-hour free phone 116123

There are also many [online mental health resources and phone services](#) that can help just follow the link.

If you need to contact the Traveller Counselling Service our contact details are;

Email is: [info@travellercounselling.ie](mailto:info@travellercounselling.ie)

Ph: 01-8685761

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