

The Traveller counselling service

Minding your mental health

It is important to take care of your mental health especially in these challenging and difficult times. There are a number of things we can do, that have been shown to support mental health, below are few tips that we hope will help

- Plan your day so that there is some routine, these don't have to be big things but regular
- Get out for a walk every day, even if it is only for 10 or 15 minutes if we can make it longer great, however it is important to keep you distance from others.
- Going for a cycle if you have bike, especially if the weather is good again be careful, both of these activities can be done with the family.
- If the weather is good over the weekend and you have transport maybe going for a picnic with your immediate family somewhere nice where there are few other people around
- Mindfulness, this is really about taking time out to sit in a quiet place or lie down on your bed for 10 or 15 minutes every day.
- If you feel yourself getting stressed or short-tempered **stop** take few minutes out sit down take a few deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth do this for about five minutes this will help to calm you down

Below are two easy exercises

Breathing exercise

The next time you're feeling anxious try this simple relaxation technique:

1. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose. Keep your shoulders relaxed. As you breath in, your tummy should expand, and your chest should rise very little.
2. Breath out slowly through your mouth. blow the air out as if you were going to whistle, but keep your jaw relaxed. You may hear a soft "whooshing" sound as you exhale.
3. Repeat this breathing exercise for a few minutes.

You can do this exercise as often as needed. It can be done standing up, sitting down, or lying down.

Mindfulness exercise

- Find a spot that is comfortable and quite you can sit or lie down, if you are on a chair, rest the soles of your feet on the floor
- Straighten your upper body, but don't stiffen.
- Rest the palms of your hands on your legs or wherever it feels most natural
- Drop your chin a little and let your gaze fall gently downward. You can close your eyes or keep them open which ever feels more comfortable if your eyes are open try not to focus on anything in particular.
- Bring your attention to your breathing: the air moving through your nose or mouth, the rising and falling of your belly, or your chest
- Notice when your mind wanders from your breath, just gently bring your attention back to the breath
- You may find your mind wandering constantly—this is normal, instead of fighting with this, practice Just sitting and paying attention to your breath
- When you're ready, just Take a minute and notice how you feel before you go back to what you were doing

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