

A young person's guide to

Isolation during the Pandemic



Oxfordshire

Isolation & COVID-19

During the Covid-19 pandemic many people of different ages will experience difficulties with social isolation and even loneliness.

With social distancing and lack of social contact with others, this can have a negative impact on people's mental health. Disruption to our everyday lives, makes it even more challenging to maintain or develop new friendships, seek further education, or seek job opportunities.

Low Mood

Everyone feels down about things from time-to-time. When things don't go to plan, if your unable to be with friends or family, it can make you feel unhappy, stressed or down. When you have low mood, you can feel very alone and as if no one else feels the same way. But actually, these feelings are quite common amongst young people and adults. The good news is that there are some things you can do to help.

Talk about how you feel

Sometimes it can be very difficult to explain in words exactly how you feel, this is quite common for people who have low mood. Speak with a trusted adult or a supportive friend, use services that are able to support people who feel down.

Try to do things that you enjoy, or used to enjoy

Even if it feels an effort, doing something that you used to enjoy in the past can really help to lift your mood. Starting to do something you enjoy again can remind you what was good about it and help you to rediscover your enthusiasm.

Isolation & COVID-19

Do some exercise, especially outdoors

It may be the last thing you feel like doing, but physical exercise is a great way of lifting your mood. When you exercise, like walking, running, or cycling, your body releases hormones called endorphins which make you feel instantly happy and help you to sleep better afterwards.

Spending time in nature, like in the countryside or in your local park, is also proven to help people who experience low mood. Just going for a walk and spending time looking at nature can really help.

Stay connected with people you trust:

You might not be able to see that person face to face, but often people with low mood isolate themselves and avoid spending time with their friends and family, but that can make things worse not better.

Even though you may not feel like it, communicating with people you trust is likely to make you feel better. Try to choose people who are active, positive, and understanding – especially people who make you feel good about yourself.



5 Ways to Wellbeing

The Five Ways to Wellbeing are a set of evidence-based public mental health messages aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population. Practicing these 5 key areas will help towards reducing social isolation and will help keep our mind actively busy:

Connect

Talk & listen,
be there,
feel connected

Connect with people around you. With family, friends, colleagues, and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Be Active

Do what you can,
enjoy what you
do, move your
mood

Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Take
Notice

Remember the
simple things
that give you joy

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are on a train, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Keep
Learning

Embrace new
experiences, see
opportunities,
surprise yourself

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.

Give

Your time,
your words,
your presence

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

5 Ways to Wellbeing

In the table below, for each one, set yourself a goal of when you would like to start doing it. Be realistic, it is much better to start small and be sure you can do it.

Way of Wellbeing	What will you do? When will you do it?
Connect	
Be Active	
Take Notice	
Keep Learning	
Give	

Online connection

The most obvious ways to connect with those that we cannot see physically is online, or in video calls. This can be a vital way to keep relationships healthy and strong. Whether it's texting, phoning, or video calling, knowing that the people you love and care for are still as much a part of your life now you can't see them is so important.

Think of activities that you and friends can enjoy digitally, although it doesn't compare to the face-to-face interaction, it's still has plenty of benefits to our wellbeing.

- Gaming together
- Quiz night
- Book club
- Cooking nights

- Create a dance routine
- Online forums
- Support groups
- Celebrate birthdays

Plan ahead

Soon lockdown restrictions and social distancing will start to ease, its healthy to look forward to enjoying, seeing friends and family in the future. Be able to plan activities, discuss with friends what you would like to achieve both individually and as a group in the near future.

Top 5 things you look forward to

Top 5 things you look forward to doing with others

Services that can help

THE MIX

The Mix

Offers support for anyone aged 13 to 25 with any sort of challenge – from mental health to money, break-ups to drugs, finding a job to homelessness.

Helpline: 0808 808 4994

www.themix.org.uk



Side by Side

Mind's online community – It's a powerful thing to connect with someone else over shared experiences.

Side by Side is an online community where you can listen, share and be heard.
www.sidebyside.mind.org.uk

We're Mind, the mental health charity.
We're here to make sure anyone with a
mental health problem has somewhere
to turn for advice and support.



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