



Mental Health Guide Factsheet

Mental Health Guide



Supporting your colleagues, friends and family

Pandemics can be scary and can affect our mental health and while it is necessary to stay informed, it is essential to care for and support our mental wellbeing too.

But it is not just our own mental health we should keep an eye on. Checking in on family, friends and colleagues is always important, but during the coronavirus outbreak, it is more important than ever.

You don't need to be an expert on mental health to be there for someone.

Check in

You might not be able to meet face-to-face, but picking up the phone, having a video call, starting a group chat or messaging someone on social media lets them know you are there to talk and ready to listen.

Don't let coronavirus be the only topic of your conversation, why not share memories or make plans for the future? You could also bring out your competitive side by playing games together online or on your phones.

Check in with older people who may not have mobile phones or use social media, as they may be feeling more isolated than ever. A quick phone call could make a world of difference to them.

Listen and reflect

If someone opens up to you, remember that you do not need to fix things or offer advice. Often just listening, and showing you take them seriously, can help someone to cope.

Ask questions

Ask how they are managing, and ask again if you are worried they are not sharing the full picture. Asking again, with interest, can help them to open up and explore what they are feeling.

A change in a person's behaviour is one of the first signs of mental ill health.



Mental Health Guide

Signs to notice

Physical changes

Frequent headaches or stomach upsets, constant tiredness or difficulty sleeping. Lack of care over appearance, changes in weight loss or gain. Suffering from frequent minor illnesses or being run down.

Emotional and behavioural changes

Being withdrawn and not joining in with conversations or being unsociable, showing a loss of confidence and humour. Displaying aggression or socially unacceptable behaviour, like being louder or more exuberant than usual. Appearing more irritable or tearful and unable to concentrate and remember things. Increasing consumption of alcohol, caffeine or taking sedatives and smoking more.

We are in this together. No one should ever have to feel alone.

Useful questions to ask

- How are you feeling at the moment?
- Have you felt like this for long?
Is it something that is an ongoing issue for you?
- Is there anyone you feel you can go to for support?
- Are there any work-related issues which are contributing to how you are feeling?
- Is there anything I can do to help?

*Small gestures
can change the
world!*

Tips for talking



Explore the issue and understand how you may be able to help, by keeping the conversation positive and showing your support.



If you are face-to-face, be aware of your body language. Remain open and display a non-confrontational posture.



Take into consideration cultural differences and styles of communication which are considered appropriate.



Be empathetic and show that you understand and take their feelings seriously.



Talk with thought and sincerity and do not offer advice such as 'cheer up' or 'pull yourself together'.



Offer initial support through non-judgemental listening and guidance.

Mental Health Guide



Listen and learn

- Non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal communication.
- If you are face-to-face, notice the person's body language, this will give you an idea on how they are feeling.
- Give the person your full focus and attention. Listen to their words and tone of voice, without interrupting.
- Be genuine and listen without being judgemental.
- Show that you respect their values and accept them for what they are saying.
- The person's values, experiences and how they feel may be different from yours, but respect and accept them. Do not criticise or judge based on your own attitudes and beliefs.
- Show them you understand what they are saying and feeling, by putting yourself in their shoes and getting on their wavelength.

Although we might not be able to give support in the ways we are used to, we can still be there for each other.

Support for carers

Do you currently care for someone? If so, it is important to know what support is available to you as a carer and those you look after.

Carers UK have lots of useful information to help both you and those you care for, look after yourselves and protect your mental wellbeing.

Professional Support

GroceryAid

www.groceryaid.org.uk

Phone: 08088 021 122

(freephone)

Mind

www.mind.co.uk

Phone: 0300 123 3393

(free from a landline, or from 3p a minute from a mobile)

Together

www.together-uk.org

Phone: 020 7780 7300

(calls charged at standard rate)

Find a therapist directory

www.bacp.co.uk

Phone: 01455 883300

(calls charged at standard rate)

You can find out more about the support available to you and relevant counselling services through our partnership with GroceryAid. Contact details above.

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group

