



Coronavirus – protecting your physical and mental health

We all have physical health and, increasingly, we recognise that we all have mental health too. It is important that we look after both as they are inextricably connected and this has never more been the case than now. The Coronavirus virus has plunged the world into uncertainty and the constant news about the pandemic can feel relentless.

All of this may well be taking its toll on people's mental health, particularly those already living with conditions such as anxiety. Being concerned about the news is understandable, but for many people it can make existing mental health problems worse. The fear of being out of control and unable to tolerate uncertainty are common characteristics of many anxiety disorders. So it's understandable that many individuals with pre-existing anxiety are facing challenges at the moment.

Anxiety may be rooted in worrying about the unknown and waiting for something to happen – and this is especially the case with coronavirus. The key is to remain level-headed, sensible and avoid overly worrying. James Le Feuvre, from Mind Jersey, says “Good advice for many islanders could be to seek information updates at specific times and avoid watching, reading or listening to news all the while, especially if this makes you feel anxious or distressed. Seek information mainly to take the practical steps needed to prepare plans and protect yourself and your loved ones”.

Increasing numbers of islanders may join those already in self-isolation so now might be a good time to make sure that the right phone numbers and email addresses of the people you care about are to hand. Agree regular check-in times and feel connected to the people around you and look out for those in your neighbourhood that might be vulnerable, lonely or isolated. You might even choose to write to them, a novelty for some in this day and age, but it shows that you are thinking of them and there to help if appropriate.

If you're self-isolating, strike a balance between having a routine and making sure that each day has some variety. Try to make the best of a difficult situation, one step at a time. Things will improve, in time. Live in the moment and shift your focus onto other things. As spring finally arrives try, if you can, to take some exercise and access the great outdoors. Take enjoyment from nature and the sunlight as our days begin to lengthen.

About Mind Jersey

Mind Jersey is a local mental health charity that campaigns to reduce stigma and increase understanding about mental health and mental illness. Its vision is of a society that promotes good mental health for all and treats people with experience of mental illness fairly, positively and with respect. The charity provides support and help so that people can take control of their mental health and live full lives. We also work with the family and friends of those caring for a loved one experiencing mental ill health and have a very active ‘Youthful Minds’ group that helps inform the services we provide for Children and Young People.

For further information please visit our website: www.mindjersey.org or check us out on Facebook.