



Us Plus

Mental Health and Wellbeing Bulletin 10

Hello everyone,

The Us Plus bulletin will be sent weekly whilst we are all learning from home. It will give advice and direct you to websites/apps that will help you stay healthy both mentally and physically during this time. Please do let me know if you find anything particularly useful.

Mrs Taylor

Today's tips come from UNICEF and focus on helping everyone readapt to our return to lockdown:

1. Recognize that your anxiety is completely normal

If school closures and alarming headlines are making you feel anxious, you are not the only one. In fact, that's how you're supposed to feel. "Psychologists have long recognized that anxiety is a normal and healthy function that alerts us to threats and helps us take measures to protect ourselves," says Dr. Damour. "Your anxiety is going to help you make the decisions that you need to be making right now — not spending time with other people or in large groups, making sure you wash your hands and not touching your face." Those feelings are helping to keep not only you safe, but others too. This is "also how we take care of members of our community. We think about the people around us, too."

If you are worried that you are experiencing symptoms, it is important to speak to your parents about it. "Keep in mind that illness due to COVID-19 infection is generally mild, especially for children and young adults," says Dr. Damour. It's also important to remember, that many of the symptoms of COVID-19 can be treated. She recommends letting your parents or a trusted adult know if you're not feeling well, or if you're feeling worried about the virus, so they can help.

And remember: "There are many effective things we can do to keep ourselves and others safe and to feel in better control of our circumstances: frequently wash our hands, don't touch our faces and engage in social distancing."

2. Create distractions

What psychologists know is that when we are under chronically difficult conditions, it's very helpful to divide the problem into two categories: things I can do something about, and then things I can do nothing about.

There is a lot that falls under that second category right now, and that's okay, but one thing that helps us to deal with that is creating distractions for ourselves. It is a really good idea to complete the work set on 'Shown My Homework' and join your live lessons but also make sure you set time aside for things you enjoy: watching a film, reading a novel, playing a game, baking, crafting etc.

3. Find new ways to connect with your friends

If you want to spend time with friends while you're practicing social distancing, social media is a great way to connect. Get creative: set up your own friendship group challenge eg, best cake decorator / most creative use of an egg box / film your own music video etc.

It's not a good idea to spend too much time on social media — agree a screen time schedule with your parents / carers as over-use of your screen time can increase anxiety and disrupt your sleep patterns.

4. Focus on you

Have you been wanting to learn how to do something new, start a new book or spend time practicing a musical instrument? Now is the time to do that. Focusing on yourself and finding ways to use your new-found time is a productive way to look after your mental health.

5. Feel your feelings

Missing out on events with friends, hobbies, or sports matches is incredibly disappointing. "These are large-scale losses. They're really upsetting and rightly so to teenagers," says Dr. Damour. The best way to deal with this disappointment? Let yourself feel it. "When it comes to having a painful feeling, the only way out is through. Go ahead and be sad, and if you can let yourself be sad, you'll start to feel better faster."

Processing your feelings looks different for everyone. "Some kids are going to make art, some kids are going to want to talk to their friends and use their shared sadness as a way to feel connected in a time when they can't be together in person, and some kids are going to want to find ways to get food to food banks," says Dr. Damour. What's important is that you do what feels right to you.

6. Be kind to yourself and others

Now more than ever we need to be thoughtful about what we share or say that may hurt others. This is important to think about in your online communication and the way you treat people at home!

Finally – two other resources that will help you keep fit and access some great reading:

Joe Wicks is running his PE sessions again – You won't be able to join these live but you can access them when you are not participating in online lessons.

The Body Coach @thebodycoach

Audible UK @audibleuk

Audible Stories - 100s of kids' audiobooks for free. Just click, stream and listen <https://stories.audible.com>

Remember that you can contact the TIS team at Penrice if you need to discuss any worries or anxieties you might be feeling at this time. You can do this by emailing me at ktaylor@penrice.org.uk

