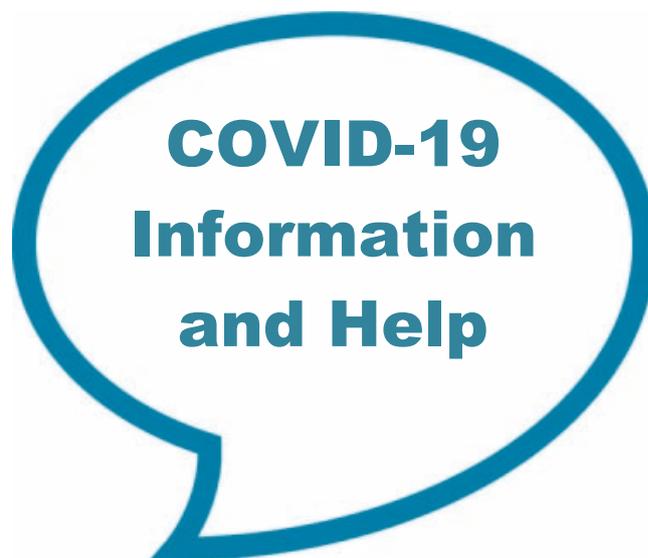


09 April 2020



Newsletter for the Eden Area – Mental Health & Wellbeing

This is a Mental Health Special of a weekly newsletter aiming to give information, advice, guidance and details of useful contacts during these challenging times. Daily updated information about Covid-19 is available on the Cumbria County Council website:
<https://cumbria.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

Tips for Supporting your Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing

Here are some tips from Deacon Mary Edwards, Churches Together (Penrith), and member of Eden Community Resilience Forum to help us through these worrying times.

Five ways we can look after ourselves now - and in the future.

Some of us are used to being physically 'confined' to our homes. But for many more of us this is a huge change and something which we need to adapt to. We need to look after ourselves physically and mentally during this time.

The following suggestions are based on Mind's 'Five ways to wellbeing', developed from research work by the New Economics Foundation. We hope they give us all some ideas and inspiration on how we can care for ourselves – and care for our friends, family and neighbours.

Connect

This is even more important at the moment when we have to be physically apart from other people. We need to be socially in touch - we all need to feel connected to others, to experience the companionship of others, to feel valued.

It may seem harder whilst most of us need to stay indoors, but we can still stay connected. We can pick up the phone and talk to someone – and that includes ensuring we really listen to them as well as sharing our own thoughts, hopes and concerns. We all need a purpose in life, and taking the initiative and phoning others to check up on their wellbeing can be part of this. As well as speaking to our friends and loved ones, there are support and listening services available both locally and nationally, which we can use as a listening ear and means of connection.

When we are starting to feel a bit ‘down’ or overwhelmed by what is happening, picking up the phone and chatting with someone can lift our spirits. We can laugh together and cry as well if we need to; we can be there for each other, encouraging each other.

For those of us with family at home we need to ensure we have space and ‘time out’ from each other as well as being able to enjoy having company in our home.

Be Active

It is proven that regular physical activity promotes our physical and mental wellbeing. Some of us are allowed to go out for exercise each day at the moment, but if we aren’t allowed away from the house we can perhaps use our garden for exercise, or the stairs if we have them. For those of us who are not physically able to do that, perhaps we can still do some ‘armchair exercise’ – moving hands, arms, legs, stretching muscles – exercising as much of our bodies as we can - perhaps as we listen to music. If you have internet access there are free fitness videos available online.

Or perhaps we can be active through cooking, cleaning, gardening – this is an opportunity to do all those jobs we haven’t had the time to do, or have just been putting off!

We can also exercise the creative side we all have – even if we think we don’t. How about doing some colouring – a really popular pastime now. Many people also find puzzle books (crosswords and Sudoku’s and so on) stimulating and enjoyable.

Take Notice

We have all probably heard about ‘mindfulness’, being ‘present in the moment’ and how beneficial this is for our wellbeing. Being aware of our surroundings, taking time to listen to a bird singing, feeling the air on our faces, enjoying looking at a plant or ornament on our windowsill. Anything which helps us to be more aware of our surroundings, and notice and enjoy the good things which are around us.

For those of us with faith, being still with God is an excellent way of ‘being present’ – we don’t have to use words – we can merely rest in His presence, held and loved by Him. Lighting a candle or playing quiet music may help us do this.

Doing something different also helps us to be more aware - even if it’s only sitting in a different place to eat our lunch, or getting out different plates and mugs to use.

Learn

Continued learning throughout life enhances our self-esteem and helps us feel our lives have purpose. Setting ourselves goals is also linked to higher levels of wellbeing. Goals can be simple things – reading a book, researching something on the internet (if we use a computer), learning a new word every day, doing some decorating, taking up a new hobby.

We also need structure to our days, even if we can't go out and can't have visitors. One suggestion is that we organise our days into 'events' e.g. - breakfast, coffee time, lunch, afternoon cup of tea, supper, bedtime - and then plan how we will spend our time between each 'event'. This breaks down the day into much shorter periods of time and will help avoid our days seeming 'never ending'.

Give

Acts of kindness are hugely beneficial for those who receive them and those who carry out the kindness. This is harder now we are at home for most of the time, but we can still share a smile and an encouraging word whilst we are out walking (keeping our distance of course) or talking on the phone (did you know you can tell if someone is smiling even if you can't see them?). We can make a point of thanking the supermarket assistant. If we are able to, charities will need our financial gifts even more now than they ever have. And the foodbanks still need our gifts – including toilet rolls!

These are some examples of the 'five ways' which help our mental and physical wellbeing. You will be able to think of many more. Using some of these activities and approaches will help us to have purpose and hope, and give us encouragement, even when things seem really tough.

Support Available

If you find yourself struggling, in need of some support or just need a listening ear, **MindLine Cumbria** is a local mental health support line which will continue to run throughout the current situation.

MindLine Cumbria is open 12noon - 11pm Monday to Friday, and 5pm - 11pm on weekends and Bank Holidays.

You can access MindLine by phone, text, email or web chat:

Call: **0300 561 0000**

Text: 'Mind' to **81066** followed by your message

Email: info@mindlinecumbria.org

Web chat and further information available at: www.mindlinecumbria.org

If you need support or need to talk outside of MindLine Cumbria opening hours you can call the **Samaritans** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on **116 123**. The Samaritans are not just a service for when we are in crisis, but are there for you at any time, whatever you are going through.

Mental Health and Mental Wellbeing Partnership

The COVID-19 pandemic presents an unprecedented challenge to the mental health and mental wellbeing of the population of Cumbria. Voluntary and statutory sector partners recognise that providing support to help people mitigate the psychological impact of the pandemic is an essential component in a multifaceted all agency response.

The Cumbria Population Mental Health and Mental Wellbeing Partnership is an all age collaboration designed to help the residents of Cumbria maintain optimal mental wellbeing in challenging times.

The partnership is chaired by the County Council's Public Health Lead for Mental Health (Mike Conefrey) and includes 3rd sector and NHS colleagues.

The primary aim of the partnership is to equip individuals and communities with the skills and knowledge to maintain optimal mental wellbeing during the pandemic. This is designed to mitigate the pressures likely to be imposed on voluntary and statutory mental health services. Initially the Partnership will be working through the networks below to both disseminate information and gather intelligence.

- District Community Resilience Groups x 6
- Mental Health Provider Forum – North Cumbria
- Mental Health Provider Forum – South Cumbria
- Cumbria Mental Health Concordat Group
- Action for Health Network
- Cumbria Children & Young People Safeguarding Hub
- Cumbria Children's Safeguarding Partnership
- Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Reference Group
- Cumbria Suicide Prevention Leadership Group
- Integrated Care System Mental Health Steering Groups x2

The COVID-19 - Cumbria Population Mental Health and Mental Wellbeing Partnership would like to draw your attention to the UK Government/Public Health England guidance for the public on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (COVID-19). This can be found here – [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

In addition, the partnership recognises that in the current very challenging circumstances there may be people whose struggle with their mental wellbeing may lead them to consider suicide. If you are interested in Suicide Prevention, please undertake the 20 minute *free* e-learning training developed by the Zero Suicide Alliance 'Suicide – let's talk'. The training can be found here – www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training

This on-line training is freely available to anyone.

General Mental Wellbeing Advice from Suicide Prevention Network

Mind – Coronavirus and your wellbeing: www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus

Samaritans – If you're worried about your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak: www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help

Mental Health Foundation – Looking after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak: www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Public Health England Every Mind Matters – 10 tips to help if you are worried about coronavirus: www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters

World Health Organisation – Mental health and psychosocial considerations during COVID-19 outbreak: www.who.int/coronavirus

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health for Children and Young People

Resources for School Hubs in Cumbria

Anne Sheppard (Strategic Manager Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health at Cumbria County Council) has pulled together some information on emotional wellbeing and mental health resources for the school hubs in Cumbria. It will be a useful resource for communities too.

ThinkNinja App

North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust has shared information on an app called ThinkNinja that is being made freely available to all 10-18 year olds, UK-wide for the duration of the crisis. The app brings self-help knowledge and skills to children and young people (10-18 years old) who may be experiencing increased anxiety and stress during the crisis. More information can be found here – www.healios.org.uk/services

Contact List for Mental Health Support

Every Life Matters have collated a list of contact details for national and local sources of mental health support.

Wellbeing and Mental Health during Covid-19

Finally, a leaflet has been prepared by Every Life Matters. Arrangements are being made to deliver a hard copy of the leaflet to every household in the area by the end of the month.

Thank you to all the community groups, organisations and individuals for all your fantastic work supporting communities across Eden.



HM Government



CORONAVIRUS

WASH YOUR HANDS MORE OFTEN FOR 20 SECONDS

**Use soap and water or a
hand sanitiser when you:**

Get home or into work

Blow your nose, sneeze or cough

Eat or handle food



For more information and the Government's
Action Plan go to **nhs.uk/coronavirus**