

What doesn't help?

- 1. Worrying about things we can't control** - none of us know what is going to happen in the next few months, so deal with you what you are able to. For today, you are doing your best and that is enough. Some people find mindfulness meditation a helpful way to stay in the moment.
- 2. Dwelling on gloomy "what if" conversations with friends** - try and get out of chewing things over in your head. Watch for negative thought patterns and challenge them.
- 3. Paying too much attention to social media** - there's a lot of speculation about the virus – where it came from, if it is real, what the government is thinking. Try not to get dragged into debate. Don't speculate and post material that criticises or blames people or can't be verified.
- 4. Watching too much news** - too much coverage can make us all anxious and the pandemic isn't the only tricky news story in the media this winter. Unless you have to, perhaps look at one bulletin a day.
- 5. Judging other people's behaviours** - don't worry about how others are responding to the restrictions, you can't do anything about them. It's easy to let our fear or anxiety come out as anger towards others, gossip, or even angry outbursts. It's hard, but try to lead with kindness even if people seem to be behaving irresponsibly. If you feel you need to say something, do so politely.
- 6. Neglecting your health** - we often put a brave face on when times are hard and at the moment people aren't coming forward as often with health worries that might become significant issues. If you have symptoms of coronavirus, get a test. If you have other health worries – see your GP – lumps, pain, prescription renewals and routine blood tests all still need to happen. Whether it's physical or mental health the NHS is still open and available.
- 7. Putting up walls** - when we are busy or struggling it's easy to but blinkers on and withdraw from friends and family. If you feel yourself pulling back from work, or people bring it to your attention – use this as an opportunity to look again at your wellbeing.
- 8. Getting pushed around by others** - sometimes when we feel a bit lost or overwhelmed we can allow ourselves to be directed by others. Sometimes that's a good thing – our friends and family help us through. However, it can be hard to resist friends who want you to break rules on social distancing or meeting for example. It can also lead to feeling trapped in toxic relationships or obliged to help people that aren't good for you.
- 9. Going to excess** - our research has told us that some people are using alcohol, overeating, over spending and illegal drugs to cope with stress. Try and keep an eye on your drinking, what you are eating and what you are spending. If things are getting of control, find a helpline or speak to someone you trust.

10. Losing your balance - we're juggling life, college and family at the moment. There's a real risk that if we lose the balance of the different strands we can end up in trouble. Try and find a balance between college, home and personal needs and stick to it.