

During this time of uncertainty and change, it is as important to look after our emotional wellbeing as it is our physical health.

There are many ways we can safeguard our emotional and mental wellbeing during a period of isolation, as well as managing potential stresses and anxieties around the Covid-19 virus.

Maintain a sense of routine – get up and dressed at a reasonable time each day. Eat meals at regular intervals, go to bed at a regular time. Differentiate between week days and weekends.

Maintain a healthy diet - be mindful of snacking too much! Spend time cooking/baking healthy food, try to be creative with the food you have in, encourage children to help prepare food – talk about where food comes from, how it grows, how it is prepared etc.

Engage in physical exercise – in the garden or inside, an old fitness DVD, create an obstacle course in the garden, have a skipping competition, jog on the spot – but do take care! Keep windows open for fresh air.

Vary daily activities - eg download podcasts, do some arts and crafts, watch a film together as a family, design a new board game, do some baking, write a letter or a story, read, play board games, create a word search for other family members to do, learn some words in a new language, do some gardening, learn the words to a pop song and have a family concert!

Limit the news – watch or listen just once or twice a day, do not have it on continuously, especially if you have children around or feel anxious about events yourself

Explore other means of contact with people – video calling (via skype, FaceTime, Whatsapp etc), telephone calls, emails, writing letters or postcards to relatives, sending pictures by post, reading aloud to a relative over video calls etc

Mindfulness – make Mindfulness practice a part of your daily routine. Mindfulness can help us focus on the ‘here and now’ rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Practicing Mindfulness with your children can also help you better understand their perspective and needs and help build a closer relationship. Mindfulness helps us to focus on information coming through our senses at any particular moment, and as such, can help increase our focus and concentration, help us cope with stress and anxiety and help to develop creativity and imagination. There are several website and apps available to support Mindfulness meditation and practice. One example is

<https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities/>