

5 WAYS TO Wellbeing

IN NATURE, IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND IN YOUR DAILY LIFE

Taking good care of our mental wellbeing is so important in times of uncertainty and change, such as the current COVID-19 situation. Whilst humans are naturally inclined to reach out to community, to friends and loved ones in times of uncertainty; the social distancing requirements mean that we need to maintain physical distance from others and stay at home as much as possible. It's important – now more than ever – that we take regular, meaningful steps to protect our mental health and wellbeing. Just like regular exercise and eating well are good for physical health, there are similar activities you can do regularly, to protect your mental health and wellbeing...

TAKE NOTICE

Stop what you are doing for a moment and take three deeper than usual breaths. Once you've done that take time to notice and be curious about what you might be experiencing, keeping in mind that being

anxious is understandable and reasonable right now. Being mindful can help you also notice that when you're fearful, you might not make the clearest, best decisions. Mindfulness is like a stethoscope you hold to your heart; it lets you know how you're feeling in a particular moment, so you can figure out calmly what to do next. Why not try practicing some mindfulness exercises? Taking notice of nature is also an excellent way to practice mindfulness. Make sure to step outside regularly and notice how warm, cool or sunny it is. Take notice of the trees or plants in your garden or neighbourhood. Listen out for sounds from local birds, or the colours of the leaves on the closest tree you can spot.

KEEP LEARNING

We are all learning new things about how to manage COVID-19 and its impacts on our lives, and making sure we are accessing supportive and helpful information can help us manage our emotional response. Find two or three key resources (such as the ones listed at the end of this message) and check in a few times a day for updates. Taking good care to limit your time on news or social media sites to a minimum, as information overload can be emotionally overwhelming.

Set yourself a timer for 20 mins and once it goes off, go and practice one of the other 5 ways. You can also use the extra time at home to learn something new; a skill or hobby you've always wanted to learn or take up. There are so many courses you can take online. Why not try to learn a new language or to how to cook a recipe you've never tried before.

BE ACTIVE

Being active is not only good for our bodies it's good for our mental health too. Whether as a distraction from the newsfeed or because you're stuck keeping your social distance and need something to do, there are plenty of ways to be active on your own and at a safe distance from others. Stretch in your body in the backyard, go for a walk, ring a friend and have an over the phone dance-athon! Start or end your day with some yoga. Walking to a local or in a national park are also good ways to be active while observing social distancing – as long as it's alone or with someone you already live with. Being out in nature has added mental health benefits. You could try riding, hiking or kayaking in a national park.

CONNECT

Connecting with others can be really challenging when we can't physically be with each other. We can take the opportunity to connect with each other by phone, video call or online. Reaching out, sharing how we feel and offering support to others is important and protects both our physical and emotional health. Set up phone, online or text-message groups with your mates and agree to send each other random messages of support during the week, start a weekly email update to friends and family, a video blog, post handwritten letters or cards or simply wave and smile at people across the street. Why not organize a regular family dinner by Skype? If you are working from home make sure you check in with colleagues for a daily chat. If you have more time on your hands and are looking for something new to do, connect with other through an online forum.

GIVE

The current situation may give some of us a unique opportunity to give our time. If you can offer support to neighbours, friends and colleagues make a call and listen/check in. If you have some spare resources pop a note in neighbour's letterboxes offering to help. You can also give by sharing your ideas of how to take care of ourselves and each other online and with your loved ones.

For further advice about COVID-19 please visit:

www.health.gov.au www.who.int and www.mentalhealth.org.nz

You can also visit the **SA Health 5 Ways to wellbeing in Nature** campaign page for further advice: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/5waysToWellbeing



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