DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING IN COVID-19 TIMES

Cheryl Deguara

District Wellbeing Officer
Mental Health First Aid Facilitator
Email: cdd@maxi.net.au   **Mobile:** 0419 465 962

9 ways to take care of yourself during coronavirus

The world is pretty topsy-turvy right now, because of the global panic around coronavirus (COVID-19). If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed by it all, be reassured that this is a very normal response. However, it is important to go easy on yourself and to take time for self-care.

This is a list of self-care activities that you can do from home:

1. STAY ACTIVE

It is pretty well known that exercise is really good for both our physical and mental health. There's heaps of different types of exercise you can do from home, thanks to YouTube and apps.

2. TAKE 10 TO BE ZEN

When we're stressed about something (such as coronavirus), our thoughts tend to speed up. Taking 10 minutes or so to practise mindfulness can help produce a sense of calmness.

3. CHAT WITH YOUR MATES

Even if an in-person meet-up is off the table, try to stay in touch with your mates via text, Messenger, WhatsApp, FaceTime, or (gasp!) a good old fashioned phone call. Ask them how they're feeling and share your own experience if you feel safe to do so.

4. MAKE A HOMEMADE MEAL

Good nutrition is always important, but during stressful times there's nothing better than a tasty, healthy homemade meal – especially if you made it yourself. You could ask a friend or family member for their favourite recipe.

For many people it may be challenging to get some ingredients at the moment. If you are running low or not able to get certain things, it is totally fine to keep it really simple.   You could also get creative with substitutions or Google '[ingredient] substitute' for ideas.

5. TAKE A BREAK FROM THE NEWS

Between the news and social media, we are all feeling saturated by coronavirus updates right now. It is important to stay informed, but try to limit your media intake to a couple of times a day and use trusted news sources. If you catch yourself turning to social media because you are feeling isolated, take a break and spend time on another activity.

6. MAKE A MUSIC PLAYLIST

Music can make us feel so much better. Hop on Spotify and make a playlist with your favourite songs. You could make a group playlist and ask your friends to add five of their favourite songs as well. If you want to get fancy, you could make several playlists for different moods/vibes (e.g. rainy day, feeling happy, etc.).

7. DECLUTTER FOR FIVE MINUTES

If you are suddenly spending a lot more time at home, it can help to have an environment that feels good to you. Instead of getting all Marie Kondo and trying to overhaul your whole space in a day, try decluttering for five mins a day.   Pick a shelf to start with, or pick up five things and find a home for them.

8. WATCH OR READ SOMETHING UPLIFTING

Distraction can be a good thing. Watch something that you find uplifting and allow yourself to zone out from what's going on in the world. Some suggestions include *The Good Place* and *Brooklyn* 99 on Netflix, or *The Bold Type* and *Family Guy* on Stan.

9. LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Have you wanted to get into drawing or learning a musical instrument?   Now is a great time to make a start. If you want to learn a new language *Duolingo* is an awesome free language learning program you can access from your computer or phone.   *YouTube* has great free online tutorials for pretty much everything.