

TACKLING LONELINESS DURING LOCKDOWN

Most of us have seen a sudden and drastic change in our lives now that we are in lockdown. We're generally not equipped for long periods of isolation like this. There are things we can all do to keep our minds occupied, and combat loneliness while the coronavirus lockdown is in effect.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Make the effort to stay in touch with friends, family and neighbours. The best way to do this given social distancing is through technology.

- Call your friends, colleagues and relatives regularly on the phone and see how they are
- Create WhatsApp groups with neighbours, family or friends. Share how you're getting on and ask other people how they are and don't forget to share your wellbeing tips
- Use Facebook and Twitter to keep up to date and keep in touch
- Offer to help with shopping or running errands for those who may need assistance. You can leave the bags on the doorstep

It is worth bearing in mind that for older people, the phone may be the easiest and most accessible way to stay in touch. Newer technology can be intimidating for older people but do try to offer support and see if you can persuade an older relative to see the benefits of newer technology.

STAY POSITIVE

Staying positive is one of the most important parts of tackling loneliness. Staying in touch is a great way to remain positive.

Social distancing doesn't mean no social contact. Schedule regular calls and talks with the people you care about, even if you don't have a lot to say. Try scheduling the calls in advance, and regularly, to give you something to look forward to which is just as important.

It is worth having a look for any community support groups which can be found online.

STAY ACTIVE

Keeping moving will keep you feeling active and happy. We're allowed to leave our homes for exercise once a day. Take advantage of this and go outside. With the weather having improved significantly, appreciate the lighter and brighter days. Feel the sun on your face and explore the quiet world around you without the usual rushing around that we normally do.

There are lots of online resources to help you stay fit during this lockdown. There are a number of videos showing you how to warm up, stretch, work out and cool down in an hour. Lots of gyms have also moved to an online method of working with exercise classes broadcast live and often for free.

STAY INFORMED

Stay up to date and know what's happening to ensure that you can deal effectively with this time alone. Stay away from sensationalist news sources and social media but make sure that you regularly check official government sources.

START SOMETHING NEW

You might find you suddenly have a lot more time on your hands. There are a number of ways to find new and exciting things to learn and do, in the comfort of your own home. For example, Duolingo is a free to download app that teaches you languages in a natural way, in as little as ten minutes a day.

The budding artists among you may find Drawspace to be a helpful resource, with free and paid lessons for people of every skill level.

Do you have any other ideas of tackling loneliness during lockdown, if so, please share those with us!