



BE KIND TO YOURSELF: KEEP YOUR MIND ACTIVE

The current situation means that life is changing for all of us for a while. It may cause you to feel anxious, stressed, worried, sad, bored, lonely or frustrated. It's important to remember that it's ok to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently. You might also have been feeling like this before the COVID-19 outbreak, and that's ok too.

There are some simple things you can do to help you take care of your mental health and wellbeing during times of uncertainty, and it's important that you take the time to do this to be kind to yourself. Doing so will help you think clearly, and make sure you are able to look after yourself and those you care about.

One way you can help to improve your mental health and wellbeing if you are feeling worried or anxious is to **keep your mind active**. We've shared some ideas below of ways you might like to do this.



DO THINGS YOU ENJOY

If we are feeling worried, anxious or low, we might stop doing things we usually enjoy. Focusing on your favourite hobby, relaxing indoors or connecting with others can help with anxious thoughts and feelings. If you cannot do the things you normally enjoy because you are staying at home, think about how you could adapt them, or try something new.

Think about: what do you love doing? What activities can you lose yourself in? What did you love doing when you tried it before? Enjoying yourself can help beat stress. Doing an activity you enjoy probably means you're good at it, and achieving something boosts your self-esteem. Concentrating on a hobby, like gardening or crosswords, can help you forget your worries for a while and can change your mood.

It can be good to have an interest where you're not seen as someone's mum or dad, partner or employee. You're just you, and that's important.

LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Online CPD is a great way to exercise your brain through times of boredom as well as gaining new skills and qualifications. Open University offer a range of free online courses which you can enrol on, and REED.co.uk offer a directory of free qualifications via a number of course providers that can contribute to achieving accredited qualifications. You may even be interested in learning a new language. There are a variety of online courses and tools to access in your new bi-lingual quest, BBC Languages are one organisation who offer a selection of courses for you to explore.

Please refer to the Astrea Employee Wellbeing Support and Guidance for further detail on this and the courses Astrea can offer you.

READ A NEW BOOK

If you're a bit of bookworm, why not use this opportunity to get into a new series of books or a different author to whom you would normally read? Ask friends, family and colleagues for recommendations of books they have enjoyed – you could even start a socially distanced book club!



JIGSAWS AND PUZZLES

Sometimes we need to go back to basics to keep us grounded and relaxed!

Try a crossword book or Sudoku to keep your brain engaged and feel that sense of achievement when you complete it! Or, check around your house for old jigsaws you haven't done for ages – ones of landscapes you enjoy or items you're interested in are great, and it's also a fun activity to do with other members of your household.

KEEP YOUR MIND ACTIVE ON YOUR WALKS

Many of us are going for daily walks at the moment, which is great for our physical wellbeing (check out our content later in the week on Looking After Your Body!), but why not use this as an opportunity to engage your mind as well? You could challenge yourself to take a pleasant photograph on your walk which you could then share with friends and family, or you could look for specific items or landmarks to photograph – get creative and see what you can find near where you live!

TRY COOKING SOMETHING NEW

You might already enjoy cooking and be a chef in the making – and if not, it's never too late to try! Why not give making a new dish a go, the sense of achievement if you nail it will be rewarding, and if it doesn't go to plan, you're still learning. Lots of restaurants have released recipes so that you can recreate your favourite dishes at home, and BBC food have a great glossary for any new skill you're trying to pick up: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/techniques>

We hope you've found this helpful and inspiring, remember there is never an obligation upon you, only ideas to help you!

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#BEKIND