

# Worried about Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

A booklet for young people from stem4



By Dr Nihara Krause, Consultant Clinical Psychologist

# Introduction

Coronavirus has created a new and uncertain time for us all. Many young people - particularly those who had problems before the outbreak - are worried about the effect on their mental health.

The most important thing to remember is that if you find yourself worried or anxious you're not alone.

This booklet aims to help you and your loved ones get through this period, and protect your mental health as best you can.

It provides information and tips on the following:

- The facts about coronavirus
- What young people are worried about
- Family issues
- Friendship and Relationship issues
- Adapting to change
- Managing existing mental health issues
- Dealing with loss
- Resources

## About stem4

stem4 is a charity that promotes positive mental health in teenagers and those who support them, including their families, carers, teachers, school nurses and GPs through the provision of mental health education, resilience strategies and early intervention.

This is primarily provided digitally through our innovative education programme, pioneering mental health apps, clinically-informed website and mental health conferences that contribute to helping young people and those around them flourish.

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# Chapter 1

## The Facts about Coronavirus

- What it is
- Steps we need to take
- Dealing with the news

### Coronavirus (COVID-19) - the Facts

The coronavirus is a germ which can cause an illness (COVID-19) affecting the lungs. Often the symptoms are similar to those caused by colds and other common illnesses. The most reported are high temperature, a new and continuous cough and difficulty breathing.

The facts as they are today are that very few children and young people develop symptoms and if they do, they remain mild. However, they may **completely unintentionally** pass on the illness (perhaps because they don't realise they have it).

This can impact very significantly on the health of older people and others with weakened immune systems (the body's fighter response). The good news is that most people get better and the illness doesn't usually last long.

### Protective Steps

You probably already know what protective steps you need to take, but as a reminder:

- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are unclean.
- Wash your hands when you have had contact with the outside world.
- Wash your hands with soap and for at least 20 seconds (singing all the words to 'Happy Birthday' twice lasts about this long).
- Sneeze into tissues or your sleeve and dispose of tissues carefully .
- Wash your clothes regularly.
- Only leave home when necessary (e.g. to take one form of exercise a day, or to buy essential food supplies).



### Dealing with the News

Because the situation is changing all the time, people are following the news more closely than usual. The problem is that this often causes anxiety and the news is repeated constantly, so that each time you hear the same thing, your anxiety level increases. To avoid unnecessary anxiety you may want to:

- Limit the time you spend checking the news to once a day, or every other day.
- Get your news from valid sources such as the BBC.
- Limit your time on social media. A lot of information online is inaccurate, and it can get more and more misinterpreted the more it is shared (like a game of 'whispers').
- Consider sources of news that only share positive stories. A great example is [@the\\_happy\\_broadcast](#) on Instagram.

### Resources

This is a great resource on protective steps for young children: [Coronavirus, a book for children](#) by Axel Scheffler

There's also this for children: [www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51204456](http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51204456)

For teens there's a zine by Malaka Gharib called Exploring the new coronavirus: [www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?t=1584457518291](http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?t=1584457518291)



## Chapter 2

# What Young People Are Worried About

- Things you might be experiencing (anxiety, problems sleeping, issues with time management, future worries)
- Tips on managing them

Most of us have at least one form of worry at the moment. Whatever you're thinking or feeling, you're probably not alone, and there's absolutely no shame in it.

Some common feelings you might have at the moment are:

- Fear of getting coronavirus and becoming ill.
- Fear of the virus affecting loved ones.
- Fear of the worst/death.
- Fear of social restrictions.
- Fear of social exclusion.
- Fear of passing on the virus - or being blamed for it.
- A feeling that you're somehow to blame for things.
- Lack of choice over decisions that directly affect you.
- Boredom.
- Fear of missing out on important events, or things you were looking forward to.

All of these are going to have some sort of effect, even in people with no previous history of anxiety.

(Reference: IASC reference group for mental health and social support in emergency settings version 1.1 February 2020)



## Changes to How You Think, Feel and Behave

You may also have noticed some of the following changes:

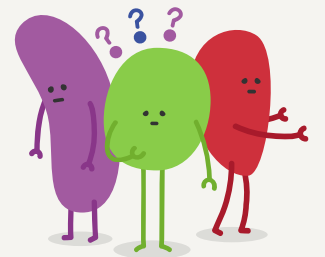
- Constantly wanting to check everything is ok by going online, asking parents or contacting your GP. You may feel relief as soon as you check but it doesn't last long and you need to check again (and again).
- Feeling tense or anxious.
- Experiencing low mood more often than usual.
- Feelings of panic, especially when it seems risk is increasing.
- Feeling irritable or angry.
- Lacking motivation.
- Becoming more distant and less involved in social situations.
- Problems sleeping.
- Eating or drinking alcohol more.

These are all common symptoms of anxiety. And if you have, or have had, a mental ill health condition it may be worsened by your current anxiety.

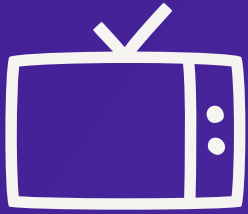
There are many effective techniques to manage anxiety, and many tools that can help. One is [Clear Fear](#) - a free app from [stem4](#) which helps children and young people manage anxiety.

In the meantime, here are some general tips. They cover:

- Anxiety caused by cancelled exams.
- Problems with your sleep.
- Tips on managing your time.



## Tips to Manage Anxiety Surrounding the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak



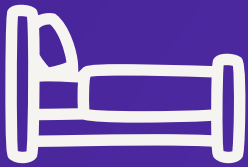
Minimise what you watch and read on the news and social media. Being on the receiving end of repeated news can be overwhelming.



You can effectively reduce the risk of passing on an infection by washing your hands with soap and water.



Aim for a balance in safety behaviours. Though it is not effective to ignore activities (such as hand washing) overdoing anything traps you in a negative spiral.



Aim to get adequate rest. Sleep is important for maintaining positive mental health.



Make a list of fun indoor plans, ensuring some of them include things you can do on your own - in case you need to self distance.



Eat well and regularly. We use more energy when we are anxious.



Remember, parents get anxious too but that doesn't mean the world is unsafe - it just means that they may need to read and apply some of these tips too.



'Take Five' to manage the physical symptoms of anxiety. Stretch out your hand and trace your thumb with a finger from the other hand. Breathe in as you move upwards and out as you move downwards. Repeat for each finger.



Focus on the facts rather than on any 'catastrophic' thoughts you may have. The health risk of coronavirus is very low for most teens.

## Tips on dealing with Cancelled Exams



### Finding it difficult to focus?

Exams give us focus. Give yourself some time to adjust to the shock and loss and then take control of the situation.



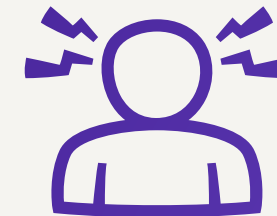
### What do I do with my time?

Create a balanced daily plan. Place limits on excess or problem behaviours.



### What do I do next?

Define your targets and adjust the way you approach them. Take one small and achievable step at a time.



### What do I do with my built-up stress?

Try and relax. Change perspective. For example, instead of seeing something as boring, try and see it as a challenge.



### How do I remember this year positively?

Change disappointment into opportunity. Find ways to remember all that was good this school year.



### How do I deal with uncertainty?

Work on making changes to things you can. Focus on what you can control rather than on what you can't. Keep a note of what's worked every day.

### How do I plan ahead?

Plan what you have to do right now and then make note of the next steps. Break each step into an achievable goal. Keep them SMART where:



Simple



Measurable



Achievable



Relevant



Time-Bound

Be ambitious, but also realistic. Keep things moving and you will get there.

## Tips on Managing Changed Sleep Patterns During the Coronavirus Period



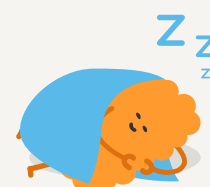
Sleep is essential to our physical and mental wellbeing. It is also often affected when we're having problems with our emotional or mental health.

Teenagers can develop sleep issues for many reasons. These can include over stimulation, lack of routine, hormonal shifts, and the association of sleep with negative things. However, whatever age you are, anxiety will have negative effects on your sleep. These can include difficulty dropping off because you're worrying or overthinking, waking up suddenly, poor quality sleep, or sleeping for shorter periods.

On top of everything else, coronavirus has caused unprecedented change to young people's lives. Not only is there anxiety about the virus and its impact, but also about missing out on friendships, education and future opportunities. In addition, physical factors such as changes to your usual routine (for example late nights or late starts) or new eating or drinking patterns can further contribute to disrupted sleep.

### The Effects of These Changes Might Include:

- An increase in bad dreams or nightmares.
- A fear of going to sleep in case bad things happen.
- A desire to spend more time with people who make you feel safe.



### Some Strategies That Might Help:

- Try to identify exactly what you're anxious about during the daytime. See if you can talk to someone you trust about it.
- If the anxiety is about coronavirus, ask a parent or friend for accurate, scientific information about it. (There's a lot of information out there, especially on social media, that isn't accurate. Remember it's only the negative, scary things that get reported - there are a lot of reassuring, positive stories that don't make the news).
- Try to get any stressful activities out of the way early in the day.
- Stay away from heated social media or alarming news programmes after 4pm.
- Take time to wind down - exercise earlier in the day (it helps) and then do relaxing things from around 5pm.
- Use your bed to sleep in only.
- Use a notebook to write down everything you have to do. Keep it, with a pen, by the side of your bed. If you find yourself thinking of more things you have to do as you try to drop off, write them down. Also use your notebook to write down any worries that pop into your head as you try to sleep.
- Follow a bedtime routine for at least 14 days. For example, dinner, TV, shower/bath, read, sleep.
- If going back to a childhood sleep routine helps, give it a go. This is an exceptional time that needs exceptional measures. Don't be embarrassed if you want your mum or dad to tuck you in - if it works, do it. The quicker you manage a fear, the quicker it will pass.
- If you can't sleep after you've been in bed for 20 minutes, get up, keep the lights low, sit in a comfy chair and do something relaxing. For example, visualise lying on a beach or listen to really relaxing music. Go to bed again when you start to feel sleepy.
- Lie in bed and squeeze your toes for a few seconds. Then relax and imagine them dropping off to sleep. Now tense your feet and relax and imagine them dropping off to sleep. Move up your body one part at a time in the same way - calves, thighs, legs, hips etc - all the way to the top of your head. Notice how tired and relaxed you feel, close your eyes and drop off to sleep.



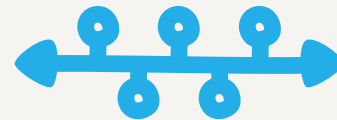
## Tips on Managing Time and Work During the Coronavirus Period

Before the coronavirus crisis, the chances are you had a busy timetable to follow and adults who helped you manage it.

Suddenly having loads of time to manage on your own can be hard. Here are a few tips that might help:

### Time Travel

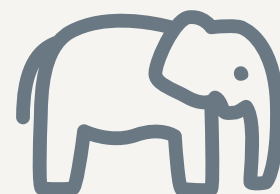
- Take a few sheets of blank paper and stick them together so you have one long piece.
- Now draw a long line in the middle with an arrow at the end and make this your timeline.
- Mark the days of the week, for this week.
- Get three different coloured pens:
  - Use one pen to write on the timeline things that have to be done, e.g. essential household tasks, any schoolwork you might have (remember, they don't all have to be done all in a day - spread them through the week based on how urgent they are and how long they'll take).
  - Use your second colour to write on the timeline things you would like to do but that aren't urgent. Spread them throughout the week (remember, not all of them need to be done).
  - Use your third colour to write down things you want to do (e.g. playing a video game). Mark these on the timeline too.



Every time you achieve one task, give yourself a star. Reward yourself at the end of one week's time travel and then create another week's journey.

### Now, How Would You Eat an Elephant?

Bit by bit, I would hope! You can do the same with big tasks - rather than putting them off, break them into little parts and do them one at a time.



## My Self-reliance Album

Choose a task that someone else in the family generally prompts you to do (for example asking you to get started on your work) and see if you can set a reminder to do it yourself. Take a photo of yourself doing it. Now do one task every day and keep a photo record.



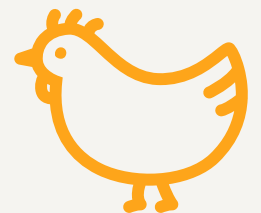
## Take a Tip from Einstein

Einstein once said: "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." We can often feel anxious and upset because we just can't see a solution. Asking a parent, teacher (if available online) or a friend how they might solve a problem will often provide you with a different way to think.



## Be like Red Hen

In the children's story, the Little Red Hen finds a grain and asks her friends Cat, Goose and Rat if they want to help her plant it and grow it. They say no each step of the way until Red Hen grows sufficient grain to make flour and bake bread. When Cat, Goose and Rat have no food and want to eat, it's too late. You will be rewarded for your hard work, so get started!



## Chapter 3

# Family Issues

The current situation means most families are spending much more time together than usual. For many this has been, positive since it has provided an opportunity to reconnect without the pressures of jobs and schoolwork.

However, there can also be tensions. Parents working from home, financial concerns, care of grandparents and separations put on hold are among some of the many stressful issues being faced.

In the most serious cases - for example, where there is domestic violence, drug misuse or someone in the offender system - there can be concerns for the safeguarding of young people. If you are concerned please contact a trusted adult or the helplines at the back of this booklet.

What can be done? Much has been written about the stress of family Christmases, but usually that's just for a short period. The fact that there's currently no clear end in sight makes the strategy of just 'sitting it out' difficult.



### Some Tips:

- Keep busy. Give yourself a routine and tasks you have to focus on (to give you breaks away from the family).
- Keep the conversation light. There's nowhere to go if you have a huge row.
- Chat to friends about what might be getting you down or write things down so you can sort them out later.
- Decide in advance which activities you do and don't want to take part in.
- Protect yourself from situations where there may be a chance of hurtful comments or behaviours.
- Try not to drink or over-eat. It might help in the short term but ultimately it only hurts you. Find more helpful self-soothing activities (e.g. drawing, writing, listening to music, or exercising).
- Don't take sides. Step back as best you can and let others find their own solutions.
- Annoying siblings? Have a strategy for when they start playing up. The only behaviour you can really control is your own.





## Chapter 4

# Friendship and Relationship Issues

Generally, a strong friendship is one where 'you can pick up where you left off'. However, without regular and close contact - and the fact that misunderstandings are common online - you might be worried about friendships fading.

### Tips on Protecting Your Friendships

- Discuss what you both need. For example, it might be important for you that your friend asks about how you're getting on with your family, and it might be important for your friend that you remember to contact them regularly.
- Set some basic rules on how you will keep in touch (how you'll do it, how often, and for how long).
- Share what's happening in your life but watch out for over-sharing. You want to maintain a closeness without it becoming a burden.
- Be kind. Information can be distorted when it's shared online, and written words can't always be deleted.
- It's even more important to show your friends you miss them and think about them. Send them an extra message (maybe saying you wished you could have met after school like you usually do) can make a difference.
- Remind your friends how much you value them. Give them examples of what you appreciate.
- Make plans for the future - it shows you both you are in it for the long haul.
- Be there when it matters.

### If You Feel You Are Becoming Distant from a Friend or Have Fallen Out:

- Talk to them about what you have noticed - it's awkward but it may help clear things up.
- Be open to seeing things from their perspective even if you feel you are in the right. This means listening to them.
- Be honest about the fact you may have hurt them, even if it was unintentional. Be prepared to apologise.
- Be prepared to put in extra effort to repair the friendship.
- Try not to 'play games' (e.g. waiting for your friend to make the first move).
- Take control of getting the outcome you want.
- Be prepared to accept that people can change. Sometimes people grow apart through no one's fault. If this is the case, feel sad about the ending but accept it, recognising that you both are on different paths.



### Weeding out One-sided Friendships

Sadly, there are some friendships that need to end because they don't do you any good. Luckily there aren't many of these, but recognising them can be hard. In general, one-sided friends are unreliable and self-centred. They can be critical of you or insincere. Or they might drop you at short notice to do their own thing.

These friendships play on your lack of self-esteem. To make a change:

- Make a decision that you want to distance yourself and note the reasons why.
- Reduce the frequency of your contact.
- If you feel comfortable to, share your feelings. Be as clear as possible without getting dragged into emotional discussion.
- Make new friendships happen by being open to new connections.

### Romantic Relationships

It's far harder to form a new romantic relationship when you're not in the same place. A relationship can certainly grow with lengthy calls and messages but regular physical contact and connectedness is hard to establish - and they're the basis of a meaningful romantic relationship. So, make the most of your time together during lockdown but don't make any definite commitments until you can meet face to face.

Beware also of exes returning. Boredom and anxiety often make people want to revisit what they know. You can be open, but take it one step at a time.



## Chapter 5

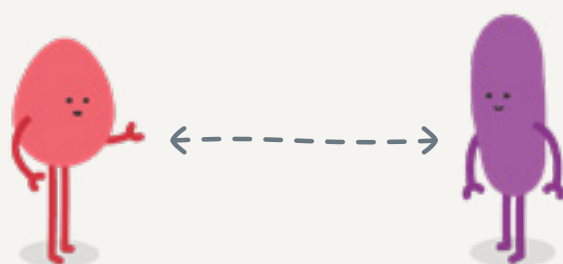
# Adapting to Change

- Dealing with social distancing and social isolation
- Social responsibility
- Tips from our apps
- Keeping in contact with friends
- Challenging stigma

### Social distancing

There's no doubt that social distancing and self-isolating are effective ways to reduce the spread of coronavirus and help protect the vulnerable.

However, they can also be very hard for young people to deal with. Across the page are a few tips on coping with social distancing and self-isolating.



## Tips for Social Distancing and Self-isolation

Social distancing and/or self-isolating are effective ways to stop the spread of the coronavirus infection. However, given the importance of belonging, social distancing is probably one of the hardest behaviours for young people to carry out.



### MEETING

View social distancing as 'contact distancing' not as a distance from friendships. So reduce contact but boost your friendships by planning some online meetings.

Make these special times.



### REACH OUT

Whilst social distancing and loneliness are not the same, the feelings may be experienced in the same way.

Counter this by thinking of ways to reach out and initiate a conversation with someone every day.



### FOMO

Feeling left out and being left out are very different things. Challenge why you feel left out; is it related to attributing something negative to yourself such as a belief that 'no one likes me'?

Remind yourself that everyone has been asked not to connect. This will help you change your thinking to something more positive.



### UNCERTAINTY

Self-isolation might put things 'on hold'. This is especially hard if it's something you've been preparing for like an exam, or if you've been looking forward to a celebration or holiday.

Rather than feeling weighed down or frustrated by the uncertainty ahead, try and focus on the present. Take things one day at a time and make it work for you.



### MOTIVATION

Finding it hard to motivate yourself to keep up the daily schedule, revision or self-care plan? Give yourself a goal together with a meaningful incentive for achieving it.

Do it, reward yourself for completing it and write down how it feels to have done it.



### OPPORTUNITY

Use this time to create something new. Rather than seeing it as 'lost time', you can see it as an opportunity to make something you don't usually find the time to do happen, without all the usual distractions.

## About Social Responsibility

Responsibility is about being accountable for one's actions, whether good or bad. Social responsibility is about being accountable for one's actions towards others - and it's never been as important as it is now.

We're all on a journey when it comes to developing personal and social responsibility. Depending on your age, the adults in your life will have differing levels of responsibility for supporting you and guiding your actions.

Ultimately however, you need to become responsible for yourself. Usually there is time to grow into this but - since the defeat of coronavirus depends on all of us - we all need to speed up and show social responsibility now.

### Some Things to Try:

1. Make a commitment to doing something and stick to it. For example, if you make a commitment to be online for no more than two hours, make it happen.
2. Don't make excuses or blame others. You're the one in charge of your actions.
3. Set your own reminders. Use timers, lists, post-it notes, alarms on your phone - whatever works for you. But don't wait for others to remind you - do it yourself.
4. Cultivate a 'moral compass.' This means thinking things through before action, reflecting on their consequences and using good judgement.
5. Give up the 'I want it now' mindset. Use your head rather than desire to make good choices. If you can delay an urge it's easier to explore the best course of action.
6. Do things that you are responsible for straight away rather than putting them off.
7. Be prepared to take feedback and criticism and make change. It's wise to be humble.
8. Don't wallow! Challenge 'it's not fair' thinking. Stop being a victim and be a victor instead.



## Me Time

You can't be with others all the time, and during the current situation you may be finding yourself on your own more often than usual. This can be positive because it creates new opportunities for personal development.

Creativity - Consider taking up new hobbies you can do on your own - for example painting, calligraphy, learning a new language, brushing up on that maths lesson you couldn't quite get, or learning to play a musical instrument. Set realistic goals. You could also bake, cook, do some gardening or do something you enjoy with a pet

There are plenty of Youtube videos. TikTok can also be fun in learning a new dance routine, and there are apps that can help you release that inner DJ or film editor in you.

Exercise – It's best to do your one "official" bit of daily exercise outside. This might be walking, running, skipping, or something more complicated like martial arts practise.

stem4 have a number of 'Daily Isolation Tips' on their social media channels you can follow. There are also some great online routines you can do indoors. You could try yoga or circuit practice - in your garden if you have one, or inside if you don't.





## Keeping in Contact with Friends - Responsibly

Ironic right? You've probably had loads of battles with your parents about limiting your time on social media and the virtual world. But right now, we're all grateful for the connections the internet provides.

Apps such as FaceTime, House Party, Snapchat and Instagram allow us to keep up to date with each other. In fact, in many ways young people have never been closer to each other. There's less drama, less falling out and more opportunities to participate since everyone is connected by a common cause. However, all good things come with a warning. Please keep safe online.

This means not speaking to strangers and taking steps to deal with online bullying. Think before you post something. A good question to ask yourself before you do is whether you would wear what you post on a t-shirt. If you wouldn't, then don't post it. People often feel they can say things online that they would never say in person.

Talking for hours can be great, but it's not the only thing you can do online with friends. For example, if gaming is your usual way of connecting, you may find that this period provides you with even more opportunity to have fun together. However, as with all things, gaming needs to be managed so that you don't find it taking up more and more of your time.



This is because gaming for long can change chemical levels in your brain, creating a need for more and more. If you can, try to set your own limits (perhaps no more than two or three hours a day) and stick to them.

If you're worried about friends who are going through a difficult time, or who have challenging home or family issues, you might want to set up regular times to keep in touch with them. Then you can discuss strategies they can try when things get tough.

The 'safety net' on the Clear Fear app is great for this because it lets you set up a toolkit of things people can do and sources of help. As a friend, you can also create your own safety net by downloading the Combined Minds app and filling in the safety net for yourself. It will tell you what you can do if your friend is worried and who you can call to support them (as well as yourself).

## Chapter 6

# Managing Existing Mental Health Issues

- Anxiety disorders
- OCD
- Depression
- Self-harm
- Eating disorders
- Alcohol misuse
- Digital addiction

At the start of lockdown, the Young Minds charity surveyed young people with pre-existing mental health conditions. Many were concerned about the impact of coronavirus on their mental health.

Sadly, there is a wide range of mental health issues you may have been struggling with, and which might be worsened.

### Anxiety Disorders

The current lack of certainty, the consequences of the virus itself and imposed isolation might all make you feel as though you have no control.

All of these factors can heighten anxiety in general but they have a profound effect on people with an anxiety disorder. On the other hand, for a small group of people, not having to manage everyday challenges such as school work or friendships may actually relieve anxiety. This will probably be short-lived since normal life will return once the virus is under control.

#### Tips on Managing Anxiety Disorders:

- Try to maintain a routine that resembles what you are used to (for example wake and sleep times, mealtimes, exercise etc).
- Be aware of 'worst-case scenario' thinking and instead focus on reassuring facts.
- Limit reading or listening to bad news.
- Make sure you go out. People with anxiety disorders tend to retreat to being at home or in their bedrooms for longer than is healthy. Being around others or outside is helpful to stop this.
- Clear Fear is an app that helps manage symptoms of anxiety. Alongside helping change anxious thoughts, behaviours and emotions, it gives you exercises to help manage a panic attack.



### Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

OCD is an anxiety disorder characterised by distressing, recurring thoughts which can lead a person to carry out particular behaviours. Contamination fears are common, so that some of the steps people are being advised to take (like hand washing) become much harder to manage.

Similarly, distressing thoughts about harming others by passing the virus may also overwhelm someone with OCD, leading to extreme behaviours and distress. Generally, medication and/or psychological interventions are recommended.

#### Tips on Managing OCD:

- Work on challenging extreme thinking and excessive behaviours. This means keeping in contact with friends and family and letting them know how distressed you are.
- Keep to strict rules so you don't go beyond the recommended cleaning rules.
- Take a break from the news.
- Manage intrusive thoughts through self-soothing techniques such as mindfulness or distraction.
- The Clear Fear app helps users challenge thoughts with the help of set goals and tasks.





## Depression

Depression is more than just feeling down. It's about having a persistently low or flat mood together with a negative outlook, changes in sleep and eating patterns and a lack of interest in the things you used to enjoy.

For some people with depression the lack of pressure to perform can lift the challenges they face. However, being isolated is generally not helpful since it feeds into the condition by disrupting daily structure, limiting contact with others and causing anxiety and worry.

### Tips on Managing Depression:

- Try to create a routine. Focus in particular on getting up and going to sleep at regular times.
- Ensure you carry out your daily exercise. This can help with mood.
- Make sure you connect with at least one person a day.
- Watch out for easier access to alcohol and limit your consumption.
- Do something you used to enjoy every day.
- Move Mood (available from June 2020) is an app to challenge behaviours associated with depression.



## Self-Harm

Self-harm is carried out to express something, usually distress. It is upsetting – both to the person doing it and their loved ones.

Being at home can be risky because it may mean easier access to ways to self-harm. On the other hand, it may reduce the triggers that day-to-day activities and social pressures may bring.

If self-harm is becoming a problem, Calm Harm is an app that provides a range of tasks to help you “surf the urge”. But if you feel at all suicidal then contact emergency services straight away.



### Tips on Managing Self-harm:

- Spend less time in your room (if this is where you self-harm).
- Make access to self-harm equipment more difficult.
- Set yourself a routine that helps break the habit.
- Identify the emotional triggers that make you want to do it and discuss them with a trusted adult.
- Remember that the coronavirus situation doesn't stop you from asking for help.





## Eating Disorders

Eating disorders usually require specialist help. If you have one, the current situation (e.g. availability of food, more family meals, etc) may be disrupting your eating patterns, as well as affecting your access to regular monitoring and treatment.

### Tips on Managing Eating Disorders:

- If you've been receiving treatment, check with your care team about how to stay physically well and what additional steps you need to take, and make sure you stick to the treatment plan you've been recommended.
- Plan what you're going to eat but be a little more flexible than you would usually.
- If you find eating with others stressful, discuss how you will manage family meals and have a plan.
- Stick to a regular eating plan and see if "binge food" can be made less accessible to you.
- Have easy access to a few planned types of food you can eat when you feel the urge to binge.
- If you're feeling deprived of exercise, swap times you might have exercised for other activities. Look at the enforced limitations on activity as part of a treatment you might have been recommended to face anyway.

Specific advice also available on the beat eating disorders website:  
[www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

## Alcohol Use Disorder

People with drinking problems may have lowered immunity and should seek the advice of a medical practitioner on how to stay safe.

Some of the difficulties you may encounter during lockdown include restricted access to alcohol leading to symptoms of withdrawal. Or you may be drinking more at home because of loneliness, boredom, anxiety or lack of structure.

It may also be hard to adapt to the loss of regular AA meetings and other forms of support.

### Tips on Managing Alcohol Use Disorder:

- Make sure you have a routine.
- Be aware of the triggers that make you drink and take steps to manage them as best you can.
- Find alternative ways to deal with stress, relax and treat yourself.
- Find ways to not be bored, e.g. decide on a project.
- Keep a record of your drinking.
- Connect with people who keep you on track.
- Follow up on alcohol support programmes (e.g. AA) regularly.



## Digital Addiction

Digital activities such as social media, gaming and online gambling have become ways to pass the time and stay connected with others. But for problem gamblers, gaming addicts and other excess digital users, the current situation can mean new risks.

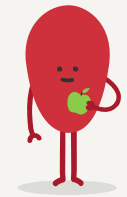
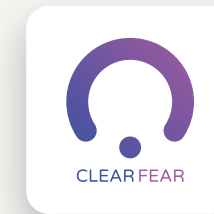
Others who can be vulnerable to digital addiction include young people with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Impulse control problems, Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and social anxiety.

### Tips on Managing Digital Addiction:

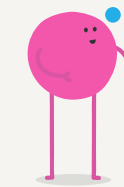
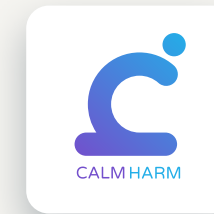
- Set limits on digital use and ensure you stick to them as best is possible. There are apps to help you set limits.
- Block distractions such as pop up messages.
- Exercise daily.
- Power down before bedtime.
- Keep phones, laptops and tablets outside your room at night.
- Set aside time for other activities that do not involve any digital use - reading, making things, cooking.
- Give yourself technology breaks throughout the day.



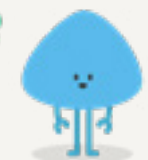
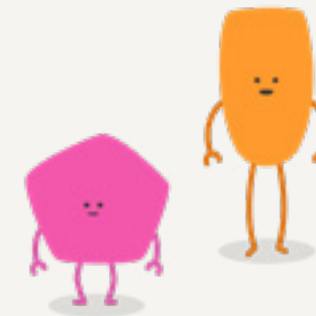
## stem4 Apps to Manage Existing Health Issues



A free app to help children and young people manage the symptoms of anxiety  
[www.clearfear.co.uk](http://www.clearfear.co.uk)

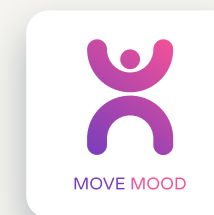


A free app to help teenagers resist or manage the urge to self-harm  
[www.calmharm.co.uk](http://www.calmharm.co.uk)



A free app to help families and friends provide mental health support  
[www.combinedminds.co.uk](http://www.combinedminds.co.uk)

Available June 2020



A free app to help teenagers manage symptoms of depression  
[www.movemood.co.uk](http://www.movemood.co.uk)

Available on the App Store and Google Play





# Chapter 7

## Dealing With Loss

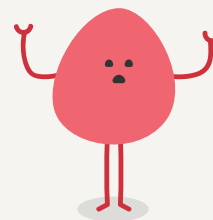
- Dealing with loss due to coronavirus
- Tips

Losing someone important is one of the hardest things we ever face in life. Often it feels as though the world has crashed around you and that you're alone. This is completely understandable, and supporting yourself through this period of grieving is one of the most important things you have to do.

Grieving is different for each of us and there is no right or wrong way to do it. However, most people describe going through different 'stages' of loss.

The order of the stages isn't the same for everyone, but most people describe:

- Shock (particularly if the death is unexpected, as it will be with coronavirus, or if you were unable to be with the person when they died).
- Sadness.
- Anger.
- More sadness.
- With time... acceptance.
- Some people may also feel anxiety or even guilt.



Other changes, such as being left without the practical or emotional support that person provided, may well make you feel even more helpless and anxious.

### The Loss of a Loved One - What You Can Do

You don't have to be alone in your grief. There are many sources of help that are only a phone call away. Isolation makes the process of grieving harder, so connecting with your family, friends and other sources of support will help.

It's also important to look after yourself by making sure you eat and sleep - these may be far from your thoughts but they're the first steps in dealing with grief. And while you may feel that you have a role in supporting other members of the family, make sure you also give yourself some time to reflect on the impact it's had on you.

### Other Losses

Although the death of a loved one is usually the hardest kind of loss, it's not the only one. You may, for example, be leaving school or college without having had the opportunity to say goodbye.

Arranging contact with friends and teachers can be helpful. Here are some things you might want to try:

- Share photos and stories - you could even create an online yearbook.
- Plan a new class tradition - perhaps an organised cheer for everyone at a particular time.
- Do something for charity as a class or year. This not only does good, but is fun to do and leaves a legacy you can be proud of.

### Financial Losses

Getting through the coronavirus period is tough financially for many families and losing a job or income affects all family members. You may find that your parents are tense or upset and there may be lifestyle changes you have to adjust to such as having less money to spend on everyday things and talk about budget.

Talking honestly, putting together a spending plan, and agreeing ways you can help each other, can all help you get through a difficult time.



# Chapter 8

## Change

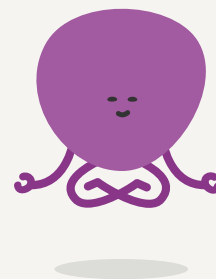
There is a new future that awaits us and if we can learn to ‘bounce and not break’ we will be able to make the best of a new set of resilience skills we have learnt.

These include being patient, kind, appreciative, self-reliant, adaptive, economical, kinder to the environment and to each other. It’s up to us, if we want to bounce, as to how we change our behaviour from now. This will mean being mindful of how we take small steps to positive change.

Step 1 will be to learn to move from ‘emergency mode’ to ‘normal mode’. Emergency mode is about operating as though there is ongoing danger. To step out of it we need to make ourselves feel safe.

Some tips to create safety include:

1. Recognising safety exists and focussing on good news and safety messages.
2. Seeking out relationships that value you and being with people who are reliable and caring.
3. Writing a list of what you enjoyed and felt secure about before the pandemic and starting to work towards including those in your life.
4. Getting back to your previous routine.
5. Re-evaluating goals and making a commitment to reaching them.
6. Recognising the positives in you that got you through this time and putting these into practice to move forward.
7. Being brave and facing things you feel anxious about in order to make positive change - one step at a time.



## Resources

Resources are constantly being updated and we recommend you access the stem4 website [www.stem4.org.uk](http://www.stem4.org.uk) for a list of all that’s available.

### Anxiety UK

Anxiety UK Provide support and help if you’ve been diagnosed with, or suspect you may have, an anxiety condition.

Text service: 07537 416905

Infoline: 03444 775774

Web: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

### Beat

The UK’s eating disorder charity.

Youthline: 0808 801 0711

Helpline: 0808 801 0677

Web: [www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

### Childline

Counselling service for children and young people in the UK. Phone, talk to a counsellor online, send Childline an email or post on the message boards.

Helpline: 0800 1111 (Everyday, 24 hours)

Web: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### Calm Harm

The Calm Harm app provides ways for children and young people to manage the urge to self harm. Developed for stem4 by Dr Nihara Krause, a Consultant Clinical Psychologist together with input from young people. Free to download.

Web: [www.calmharm.co.uk](http://www.calmharm.co.uk)

### Clear Fear

The Clear Fear app provides ways for children and young people to manage anxiety. Developed for stem4 by Dr Nihara Krause, a Consultant Clinical Psychologist together with input from young people. Free to download.

Web: [www.clearfear.co.uk](http://www.clearfear.co.uk)

### Combined Minds

Combined Minds is a free app developed for teenage mental health charity stem4 by Dr Nihara Krause, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, to help families and friends support young people with their mental health.

Web: [www.combinedminds.co.uk](http://www.combinedminds.co.uk)

## Eating Disorders Support

Eating Disorders Support provide support to anyone affected by eating disorders, including carers.

Helpline: 01494 793223  
(24 hours, 7 days a week)

Web: [www.eatingdisorderssupport.co.uk](http://www.eatingdisorderssupport.co.uk)

## Frank

Confidential information for anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drug misuse.

Helpline: 0300 123 6600

Web: [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

## Mind

Mind provide information on mental health problems and where to get help.

Infoline: 0300 123 3393

Text: 86463  
Mon - Fri 9am - 6pm

Web: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

## No Panic

No Panic provide a youth helpline and services to sufferers and carers of people with Panic, Anxiety, Phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD).

Youth Helpline: 0330 606 1174 (for 13- to 20-year olds)

Web: [www.nopanic.org](http://www.nopanic.org)

## NSPCC

Keeping children and young people safe from a wide range of abusive situations.

Helpline for adults: 0808 800 5000

Childline (for 18 years old and under): 0800 1111

Web: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

## OCD Action

OCD Action offer support and information to anybody affected by OCD.

Web: [www.ocdaction.org.uk](http://www.ocdaction.org.uk)

Helpline: 0845 390 6232  
Mon - Fri 9.30am - 5pm

## Papyrus prevention of young suicide

Providing confidential suicide prevention advice to young people and anyone worried about a young person.

Helpline: 0800 068 4141

## Relate

Relationship support and counselling for children and young people.

Web: [www.relate.org.uk](http://www.relate.org.uk)

## Samaritans

Providing confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Helpline: 116 123 (Everyday, 24 hours)

Web: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

## SANE

Offer specialist emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers.

Helpline: 0300 304 7000  
Everyday 4.30pm - 10.30pm

Web: [www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)

## SEED

Eating disorder support service.

Helpline: 01482 718130  
(Mon - Fri 9.30am - 2.30pm)

Web: [www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk)

## SHOUT

Shout is the UK's first 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere.

Text: 85258

Web: [www.giveusashout.org](http://www.giveusashout.org)

## Stonewall

Information and advice for LGBT communities and their allies.

Helpline: 0800 0502020

Web: [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

## The Mix

Information and support for under 25's, on-line chat with a trained helpline supporter.

Helpline: 0808 808 4994  
Everyday 11 am – 11 pm

Web: [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

## YoungMinds

Information for both parents and young people on child and adolescent mental health.

Parents' Helpline: 0808 802 5544  
Mon-Fri, 9.30am - 4pm

Web: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)



supporting teenage mental health

[www.stem4.org.uk](http://www.stem4.org.uk)

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Email: [enquiries@stem4.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@stem4.org.uk)

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Wimbledon Business Centre, Old Town Hall,  
4 Queens Road, London, SW19 8YB  
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