Looking after ourselves

As the situation continues and everyone has to stay at home it is important to look after both our physical and mental health; getting enough sleep, eating healthily, and doing some physical activity either at home or once a day outside.

Making a schedule and keeping to a routine can help you to maintain a positive mood and feel productive. This document covers strategies that can help you to support yourself and show you where to go for more information about:

Staying healthy: Looking after our mental and physical wellbeing is an important way to keep us feeling healthy.

Keeping connected: Maintaining friendships and socialising with others can help us feel safe and supported.

Boosting skills: Keeping our minds working and building on or learning new skills can be a great way to feel productive.

For more information from Harrow Council about health, learning and wellbeing at home

Harrow COUNCIL LONDON

For local projects and opportunities you can access from home, from online music to online counselling

youngharrow foundation

For health matters including good thinking skills, London's digital mental wellbeing service

NHS Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group

Staying Healthy

Now that the whole country is in lockdown and all young people are staying at home and social distancing when outside, it is more important than ever to practise self-care and look after ourselves. Here are some ways to take care of your physical and mental health.

⊦⊦ Stay Active ⊦⊦

Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. It can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns when in lockdown, but that can end up making us feel worse.

Research demonstrates that exercising helps look after your mental health and wellbeing. Getting outside for physical activity once a day will make us feel even better.

There are thousands of free resources, apps and videos available online to help you to get moving. Stay in, work out is a campaign full of useful resources and apps. Here are a few ideas to get your started.

⊡ Practise self-care ⊡

Self-care is all about looking after yourself, so you can get on with other things. Take the time each day to practise some self-care techniques.

This can look different for different people. Some people respond well to mindfulness: Mind, Mindful, and Headspace all offer free mental health exercises.

One important thing we can all do is **maintain a routine**: eat, sleep, wash, drink plenty of water, and get up and dressed every day. These small things can make a big difference.

♻ Need something a bit different? ♻

Explore have hundreds of live streams of different animals (puppies included).

Dublin and London Zoo both have live webcams of their animals (try your local zoo's website as well!).

Take a virtual tour around museums, art galleries and stunning places with Google Arts and Culture.

Take part in cutting edge research online with Zooniverse, helping to fight illnesses, count penguins or search for galaxies.

♣ Overwhelmed? ♣

Worrying about yourself, your friends and family during the Coronavirus outbreak is perfectly normal. However, some people may experience intense anxiety that can affect their day-to-day life.

ThinkNinja is a free app specifically designed to educate 10-18 year olds about mental health, emotional wellbeing and to provide skills to build resilience and stay well.

Good Thinking Skills is London's digital mental wellbeing service, and provides support to those who feel anxious, sleep deprived, stressed or sad.

Young Harrow Foundation has information, help, and support to take care of yourself specifically related to Harrow.

YoungMinds are a charity to support your mental health. Their website contains resources, blogs, and 24/7 support. **If you need urgent help:**

 text **YM** to **85258**

Every Mind Matters is full of advice, tips, tools and apps to help you get a healthier mind and deal with stress and

Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people. Kooth provides an opportunity to interact in a supportive way with other young people as well as receive support from a qualified counsellor.

Keeping Connected

Something you might be finding difficult is the idea that you are losing important experiences. Some will be worried about how this outbreak will affect your friendships, education, exams, moving to another school or university or your future in general. It's important that you take the time to share these worries with those around you. It is likely others are feeling the same and looking for the same opportunity to talk.

💬 Keep socializing. 💬

Staying at home and social distancing doesn't mean you cannot keep socialising – it's just different.

Reach out to others. You aren't the only one feeling worried, bored or frustrated. Don't be afraid to make the first move with a quick text, email, call or message and let others know you are thinking of them.

Find your crowd. Whatever your likes and interest, you're not alone! There are online communities for everything.

Adapt how you socialise, from video chats to playing Pictionary on Zoom. It's up to your imagination on how you can interact with others. Online board games, Netflix parties, Houseparty or even volunteering locally are some ideas to help you get started.

⚕ Living with your family ⚕

Staying at home with others everyday can be frustrating and might create tension.

Walk away from tense situations if you can, this is a great way to defuse arguments until everyone feels calmer. If you feel unsafe or afraid, don't struggle in silence. Speak to someone you trust, a friend or a helpline.

Emergency Services (999)
If you or someone else is seriously injured.
Call 999, if you can't speak follow this guide

Childline
You can contact Childline online about any problem (big or small) or call: 0800 1111

⚙ Too connected? ⚙

Take the time to look at how you are using social media: if you are overwhelmed by the news it may be a good idea to limit how long you spend online.

Set a time to check the news, messages and social media. This can help control our anxiety and stay connected.

Social media often gets a bad name, but it is full of positive messages and media. It might be helpful to seek out positive content to balance the negative. Bored Panda and The Happy News are great websites dedicated to sharing positive news

Use **hashtags** related to your interests as a distraction.

Mute conversations which might be dominated by anxiety inducing messages. Twitter has a feature to mute certain words from appearing in your feed.

Cyberbullying could be an issue some people will face during the outbreak, Unicef has put together some really useful advice to help you stop it. If you are having difficulties talk to someone.

🔍 Fake news? 🔍

The internet and social media are full of information, but it is getting harder and harder to know what is true and what isn't.

Follow official accounts like NHS or the Government for updates and information. Here are some top tips to help you decide if something can be trusted:

Where. Check where did the story come from originally?

Who. Check for the author, what do you know about them? Is there another side to the story?

Images. You can check where images come from with a reverse image search

Facts. Does all the evidence add up? Is the evidence repeated in other sources?

Boosting skills

Your school has likely kept you busy with work and learning from home, but you might find yourself with more time on your hands which you could use to start a new hobby or learn about an area you've always been interested in. This is also a good time to catch up in a subject, even just a maths app can help you get to grips with those trickier concepts. Luckily the internet is full of resources to learn all kinds of skills or subjects.

Learning a new skill or honing an existing one gives us a sense of purpose and achievement. While we are busy learning, we are less likely to experience anxious thoughts and worries.

📇 Focus on your learning 📇

There are lots of different websites and resources available to help you with your learning. We all learn differently, so finding what works for you is important.

BBC Bitesize is full of resources to help you learn, revise, and prepare for your future.

The UK Government has put together a list of online resources to carry on learning at home.

Scholastic have put together day-by-day projects to keep you learning, including decoding what your dog is thinking

TED-Ed is a website with short talks or animations covering all kinds of subjects.

Khan Academy offers hundreds of resources to help you learn or understand different subjects.

If you need a bit of extra help with your learning, the ChatterPacks blog has lots of extra resources which might help.

🔭 Work on your interests 🔭

This is also a great time to learn a new skill. There are loads of resources online where you can learn anything!

Youtube, Instructables and Make: are full of instructional videos and guides to help you get started. You could take up baking, make a boomerang or learn some DIY. Fender are offering 3 months free guitar lessons right now

Another option could be to learn a new language such as British Sign Language for only £3 or try Level 1 for free with Doncaster Deaf Trust .

📚 Lose yourself in a story 📚

Stories entertain and teach; they keep our minds active, alert and engaged.

Audible is offering hundreds of free audio books.

The National Emergency Library holds over a million ebooks you can access for free.

Overdrive helps you access books through your local library or school.

🎓 Focus on your future 🎓

Completing online courses can be a great way to show your interest and commitment to your career and support course and job applications. It can also be a great way to explore what you might want to do.

BBC Bitesize has a careers section full of resources to find out more information about careers which might suit you.

Mooc-list is a search engine to find free online courses from different providers.

The Open University and Future Learn offer around 1,000 courses for free and provide certificates upon completion (Aged 13+).

Google offers over a hundred free courses, they look at subjects such as marketing, starting a business and general career development.

Harrow Local Offer gives information about Harrow services for young people with special educational needs and disabilities