



Rewarding Learning

# 12 WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING



## 12 Ways to Support Your Health and Wellbeing

These are strange, uncertain and often stressful times for everyone, especially our students. Your school has been closed, your exams have been cancelled and social events have been postponed. Many of you may feel that you're missing out on some big milestones and important moments. There are new rules on things like social distancing that you've had to get used to, and you may have feelings of uncertainty about your future.

We understand this, and we want to help and support you. It's important to stay positive and motivated, so here are some steps to support your health and wellbeing.

### Stay connected

Young people are generally very good at and enjoy staying connected with each other, but we know that the current situation is not the same as being away from school in the evenings, at weekends or during school holidays.



You're all being asked to socially distance outside of your house and restrict your contact with your friends and others. You're probably missing meeting up with your friends, the routine of school and being able to take part in sports and other things you like to do. It's important to make it a priority to stay in touch with your friends. Enjoy each other's company using social media or pick up the phone and call them.

### Be kind to yourself

It's important that you feel good about yourself. Try and focus on you and find ways to use your time doing things you enjoy. Not only can this be relaxing and rewarding, but it's also good for your mental health and wellbeing. Go easy on yourself, and if you're starting to feel overwhelmed, you should acknowledge those feelings and speak to someone you trust. This could be a friend, a family member, a teacher or a helpline.



### Help others

Helping others will make you feel better. There are still many ways to get involved and give back. You could try donating, fundraising or even volunteering virtually, and you could check in on people who might need support.



If you notice a friend has become withdrawn or is just not themselves, maybe they're not as active in your group chats for example, reach out to them and try to offer support and help. This could be something as small as a phone call or making a playlist for them. It may not seem like much, but your words and actions can make a real difference.

## Entertain yourself

Why not take one of your current interests to the next level or set yourself a new challenge? You could read a good book, watch a new comedy or play a fun board or video game. Making something can also be fun – whether it's following a new recipe, completing a craft project or creating a piece of art. It doesn't really matter what you do, as long as you enjoy it. What's important is that you do what feels right to you.



You could also try an activity as a family, such as baking, bike riding or gaming, and it will provide you with a healthy distraction to take your mind off things.

## Continue learning

Education and learning don't need to stop just because your school is closed. Your teachers will have set you work to help you keep up with your learning. Even if you're finishing your school days or you're unsure about what pathway you will take in September, you should still continue to learn.



Learning can improve your self-confidence, and it keeps our brains healthy and our minds alert. There are many different ways to learn, as well as the work that your teacher has set you. There's so much information that's often at your fingertips, if not through technology, then on TV. Have you been thinking about learning how to do something new, starting a new book or spending time practising a musical instrument? Now is the perfect time to do that!

## Feel the feelings

It's likely that you're feeling a range of emotions at the moment. This is completely normal. Young people all around the world are having the same experiences and feelings. Even if it sometimes doesn't feel like it, our current situation is temporary.



It's so important to tell a trusted person how you feel, and you'll feel better by sharing what's worrying you or what you're anxious about. It really is okay to not feel okay. It may also sound like a cliché, but a problem shared is a problem halved. Expressing your feelings can help you to manage them and, as a result, you'll usually feel better about yourself.

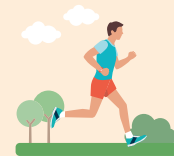
## Reduce your time online

It can be good to find out what's happening in the world and to keep yourself up to date with the latest news. However, remember that you are in control of what you see on your news feed, and it's possible to mute or unfollow accounts that promote misinformation. Limit your screen time and take a break from social media if you feel the updates are getting too much. You can stay on top of what's happening by checking the NI Direct [Coronavirus](#) pages, which are the most up-to-date and reliable sources of information for Northern Ireland.



## Be active

One of the best ways to manage your mood, and help keep you feeling good about yourself, is by staying active. Although the gym, team sports and group classes are not allowed at the moment, you can still cycle or go for a hike, run or walk. If you're unable to leave the house, you'll be able to find online exercise videos that you can follow. There are many types of activity you can do without equipment, such as yoga and bodyweight exercises.



## Healthy body, healthy mind

We're all guilty of turning to unhealthy snacks when we're bored and during stressful times. Instead, do what you can to stay fit and healthy. Be kind to yourself by eating nutritious foods and drinking lots of water to stay hydrated. Following the [Public Health guidance](#), by washing your hands and adhering to the [Northern Ireland government's advice](#), will help to stop the spread of the virus and keep yourself and others in good health.



## Take time to relax

Try to make time to relax with activities you enjoy. This could be reading a book, watching a box set, playing a video game or spending time with your family. Relaxation techniques such as [deep breathing](#), [meditation](#) and [yoga](#) can help you feel calm and in control. Regular practice delivers the greatest benefits, so see if you can set aside even a little time every day.



## Look to the future

Following the announcement that your exams have been cancelled, there's a lot that feels uncertain at the moment. We are working closely with your school and teachers to ensure that you receive a fair grade and to provide a smooth transition to the next stage in your education or the world of work. This could include remaining in school, studying at university or starting an apprenticeship or a new job.



Keep yourself updated and informed about your options by regularly checking the CCEA website for useful information on the awarding process for [Summer 2020 examinations](#). You might also find it helpful to speak to a teacher, such as your form teacher or year head, if you're unsure about your options.

## Get expert advice

We recognise that you may have concerns about your own mental and physical health, a family member's health, or the overall impact of COVID-19 on your future. If you're experiencing unfamiliar negative emotions, please know that you are not alone. It's okay to show your feelings, and it's okay to talk about them.



Here are some links to charities, helplines and advice that you might find useful.

The Mental Health Foundation website provides support for young people that addresses the mental health aspects of the coronavirus outbreak:

[Coping with coronavirus: a guide for young people](#)

Childline is open 9am–midnight. You can call them on 0800 1111, and they have an online service where you can chat with a counsellor about whatever’s worrying you. The Childline website provides advice about dealing with problems caused by lockdown and schools being closed:

[Coronavirus](#)

Samaritans is open 24/7. You can call them on 116 123 or email them at [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org). There’s also advice on the Samaritans website to help you look after your wellbeing:

[If you’re worried about your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) website provides sources of advice for staying healthy, along with videos of the NICCY Youth Panel asking the Public Health Agency and Health and Social Care Board COVID-19 questions:

[Advice on staying mentally healthy](#)

[Advice on your health](#)

See also our [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) pages for links to our resources and qualifications that can support the promotion of mental health and wellbeing.

© CCEA 2020

**COUNCIL FOR THE CURRICULUM, EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

29 Clarendon Road, Clarendon Dock, Belfast BT1 3BG

Tel: +44(0)28 9026 1200 Fax: +44(0)28 9026 1234

Email: [info@ccea.org.uk](mailto:info@ccea.org.uk) Web: [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)

