PRACTICAL SELF-CARE THROUGH COVID-19

Covid-19 lockdown has impacted our lives in many ways. Take a look at these self-care tips as a reminder to look after yourself as well as others.

Social Self-Care

Reach out to others. A wide-range of apps, such as Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom or Apple's FaceTime, allow groups of people with access to a camera-enabled laptop or smartphone to have a virtual face-to-face chat. Social stimulation is vital to our overall wellbeing, and in the digital age we have so many opportunities to keep in contact.

Tune into the wide range of performances now being offered online. Take a look at your favourite singer/band on Instagram for live gigs or the National Theatre is showing performances on YouTube: **www.youtube.com/user/ntdiscovertheatre/videos**.

Take part in an online quiz. The Online Virtual Pub Quiz even has a JustGiving page to raise money for the NHS: **www.justgiving.com/fundraising/originalvirtualpubquiz**

Physical Self-Care

Sleep at normal times. Try not to nap, and keep yourself occupied during the day with activities that are stimulating and rewarding. If you are having trouble sleeping, Sleepio is an app that helps you learn proven techniques to fall asleep faster and stay asleep through the night. The first step is to discover your Sleep Score. Take the quick online test now: **www.sleepio.com/goodthinking**

Eat at normal times. It's normal to feel peckish or to snack when you're bored. Try not to, or if you do, keep it healthy. This will help your body to stay in a "normal pattern".

Stimulate your brain. Think – crosswords, puzzles, board games, read a book, learn something new.

Exercise. Try a fitness app or video from the NHS Fitness Suite. Exercise releases endorphins, which make you happy, as well as promoting blood flow around the body, nourishing the brain, and providing a number of additional benefits to your mental health.

Mental Self-Care

The prospect of serious illness reminds us to **be thankful** for our health and other blessings. Seeing others struggle with illness can inspire us to better care for our bodies, appreciate more and judge less our physical capacities. Pause to give thanks for the various aspects of life with which you are blessed (e.g. the opportunity to spend more time at home with your family during the pandemic).

Accept limitations and appreciate small achievements. It's normal to feel totally helpless during something like this. Try to let go of your worries about things you cannot change. Find balance by doing small things to contribute, or take control over other aspects of your life. This might be by paying a bill early, by tidying the house, or helping a neighbour in need.

Take a break. Remind yourself that it's ok – and maybe even vital – to switch off for a period of time. Close social media and shut off the TV, read a book or play a game instead where you can get a much needed period of respite from the worry.

You may need **urgent help** for mental health for many different reasons. In an emergency contact the Emergency Services on 999 or the Samaritans can be called on 116 123. If you are not in need of urgent help but in distress, try your local GP or call 111 or contact the Employee Assistance Programme on freephone number 0800 328 1437.

Newham London