Looking after your mental health
while Coronavirus is in the community

With Coronavirus (Covid-19) in the community, the Under 14's Child and Family Mental Health Service for Norfolk & Suffolk have developed some key points about looking after mental health during this time. The uncertainty of the current situation may feel worrying, and there are things that you will not be able to control. However, there are things that you CAN do to promote good physical and emotional health. We have given some ideas below of how you can keep doing these things while Coronavirus is around.

There are also a number of sources of support for mental health if you are finding it hard to cope. All of these services are likely to be working with less staff, so it will be best to make the most of their website resources rather than contacting them by phone.

Just One Norfolk website: https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/

A local resource providing advice on all aspects of life for a child/ young person. Specific information about emotional health for young people and parents. An App is also available.

Young Minds website: https://youngminds.org.uk/

Lots of information about young people's mental health, with various resources available. Parents' helpline also available.

Childline website: https://www.childline.org.uk/

Lots of advice for children, young people and parents/ carers. Plenty of ideas for activities too.

Routine. Humans tend to like routine. Our bodies appreciate it, and our minds can be calmed by the predictability of it. With schools closed, it might be tempting to treat every day like a weekend. It is important, though, to create a new routine that includes the important daily activities, such as those below. Make one together that works for you.

Eat Well. Being at home more might mean easier access to treats. These can make your mood and energy levels fluctuate. Try to keep a routine to mealtimes and choose foods that will nourish the mind and body. See www.nhs.uk/change4life for tips and ideas.

Sleep well. Good quality sleep promotes emotional wellbeing, and helps your body stay healthy too. Try to keep a good bedtime routine throughout the week. If you are struggling with sleep, see www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/sleep-problems for tips and advice.

Keep active. Meaningful activity (doing things that you enjoy and/ or get a sense of achievement out of) is important for mental health. This can be anything from creating your own board game to having a home disco or making a rocket out of junk. Schedule in some physical activity every day too. Even if you are at home a lot, you can still get your 60 minutes of daily exercise, e.g. dancing, or exercise videos (e.g. see YouTube or www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/schools/primary-school/joe-wicks-work-out-videos/).

Keep learning. Schools will provide work for children to do whilst they are closed. Learning is good for confidence and can reduce boredom. Plan learning into every day. Perhaps you could develop your own learning community with your school friends through a daily video call (Facetime/ WhatsApp/ Skype) where you can set each other quizzes or ask for help with any school work you don't understand.

Keep in touch with friends and family. Social distancing (i.e. reducing contact with other people) is recommended by the NHS and is very important at the moment. However, there are many ways to continue communication safely (e.g. share photos and messages through texts, calls, email or social media). Keeping in touch with friends and family will be good for your mental health as well as theirs.

Stay informed, not overwhelmed. The media is focussing a lot on health updates at the moment, and our conversations, social media and emails are too. Whilst it is important to keep updated, it may feel worrying to be hearing so much about it. Notice urges to keep checking, and if you're feeling overwhelmed perhaps restrict your use of social media/ the news and encourage alternative conversations with friends/ family.

Other Useful Links:

www.mind.org.uk always has helpful support and includes a page on COVID-19 alongside support specifically for young people - https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/

Coronavirus: Explained Using Images & Makaton

A video can be used to explain Coronavirus to children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) with a Special Educational Needs Advisor using Images and Makaton: