



7 ways to **LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH** when there is uncertainty



Wellbeing Workshop ambassador Dr Sarah discusses how to protect your mental health during times where the future feels less predictable.

A combination of financial uncertainty, worry for the health of loved ones, social isolation, and questions about job security can trigger stress in the most even-keeled among us. Here's how to protect your mental health during times where the future feels less predictable.

AWARENESS

Be honest about what you can and can't control. You can choose to socially distance, wash your hands, and get enough sleep. You can't control other people, whether that be the government's response in your region or what's said online, so give less energy to thinking about that, and focus on what you can do to keep yourself mentally well during these times. Fuming about different political views isn't going to help you much right now. Instead, check that you're registered to vote. You can't control online comments, but you can choose to turn off all screens 2 hours before bedtime and instead read a book.

SELF-CARE

Sleep. Time outside. Healthy eating. Movement. You know how to do these things. Are you doing them though?



OTHER CARE

Now is also the time to think about friends or colleagues who might be socially isolated or lonely within their bubbles and reach out to them proactively. It gets you outside of your own head, which does you a world of good, too. Don't wait for them to ask for help. Ask how they're doing. Would they like to chat on the phone tomorrow at 2 pm? Brew yourself a cup of tea, and treat it as though you're catching up at a cafe.

STRUCTURE

If you need to self-isolate, keep routines and a structure to your day. Make sure you have similar levels of movement/exercise to what you'd normally have, some self-care, some house cleaning (you're going to be inside more, so it's a chance to make home a nicer place to be), and a sense of accomplishment each day, even if it's just feeding the sourdough starter you've taught yourself how to make.

LAUGH

Add some humour or entertainment into the mix by curating your social media feed. Reduce your exposure to triggers such as COVID updates (if the health of loved ones is stressing you) or of following business news (if financial / job uncertainty is on your mind). You can refollow at a later time, but be wary of what's making you feel less-than-good right now.

CONNECT

Make a time and specifically connect with your friends and family through phone calls, WhatsApp, FaceTime, or Zoom rather than through social media feeds. Schedule this into your week to build predictability in an otherwise uncertain period.

PRESENCE

Take it one day at a time. With so many things ahead being difficult to plan for, notice what's going well right now. Look for silver linings. Even on a rubbish day there will be things that have gone well. Notice them. If your mind races forward to worrying about the future, which is a perfectly normal thing for it to do, ask yourself if this thinking is helpful or if it's just spinning your wheels and causing stress.

Be kind. Stay safe