

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF—TIPS FOR CARERS



PACE YOURSELF:

Monitor yourself for disrupted sleep, excessive fatigue, irritability, poor focus and marked anxiety. If we run on empty, we can't care for those depending on us. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

ANXIOUS OR WORRIED?

Increased anxiety is common as we navigate COVID-19 and its broad consequences, especially when the demands on us have increased. Action is one of the best treatments for anxiety. Share your concerns and problem solve with family and friends to plan coping steps.



TAKE BREAKS WHERE POSSIBLE

Plan down time, it helps us refuel physically and emotionally .

MAINTAIN GOOD HEALTH HABITS

As stress and demands increase, healthy habits often take a hit. Make sure you eat at meal times and maximise healthy eating, limit alcohol, try to get enough sleep, prioritise aerobic exercise and get some sunlight.

PROMOTE TEAMWORK

Are there other family members who could step up and help out? Don't be afraid to ask.

EXERCISE, EXERCISE, EXERCISE

Aerobic exercise is vital for stress reduction. A short aerobic walk or workout is better than nothing and can make a difference in how we feel.

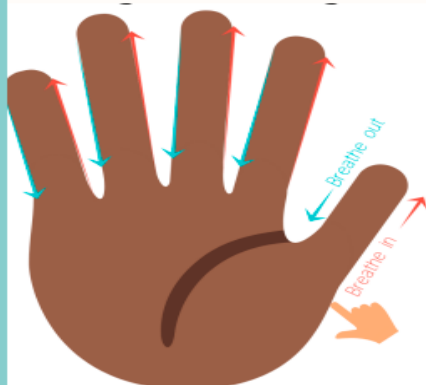


CONNECT, CONNECT & CONNECT AGAIN

Reach out to family, friends, and your favourite community groups for social contact. Call, Facetime, Zoom, Skype or try Google Hangouts to reduce your isolation. Meaningful and fun connection, emotional support and healthy problem solving are vital to your health and well-being.

5 Finger Breathing:

1. Stretch one hand out so that you have space between your fingers.
2. Hold up your pointer finger from the other hand.
3. Start at the bottom of your thumb. Use your pointer finger to trace up your thumb as you **slowly** breathe in through your nose.
4. When you get to the top of your thumb, **slowly** breathe out your mouth as you trace down the other side.
5. Repeat for all fingers until you have traced your whole hand.



LOOK AFTER YOURSELVES cont'd

Grounding Exercise

Re-orient yourself in place and time by asking yourself some or all of these questions:

- *Where am I?*
- *What is today?*
- *What is the date?*
- *What is the month?*
- *What is the year?*
- *How old am I?*
- *What season is it?*

Sensory Awareness

Grounding Exercise 2

- Name 5 things you can see in the room with you.
- Name 4 things you can feel ("chair on my back" or "feet on floor")
- Name 3 things you can hear right now ("birds chirping" or "tv")
- Name 2 things you can smell right now (or, 2 things you like the smell of)
- Name 1 good thing about yourself

Other Grounding Activities

- Keep your eyes open, look around the room, notice your surroundings, notice details.
- Hold a pillow, stuffed animal or a ball.
- Place a cool cloth on your face, or hold something cool such as a can of soda.
- Listen to soothing music
- Put your feet firmly on the ground
- Focus on someone's voice or a neutral conversation.

Reference—St John of God Hospital, Minding our mental health during the Covid-19 crisis: A resource for carers.

Contact Us

FOLLOW

Follow us twitter to keep up with news and opportunities to support our young people.



You can read more about the Virtual School and find useful resources by going to

[Virtual School | Barnet Education & Learning Service | London \(bels.org.uk\)](#)



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