

Keeping Good Mental Health – 21 Top Tips From the Front Line to Each Other

The realities of our Coronavirus-restricted lives has thrown up a life-raft of fabulous suggestions from yourselves, fellow colleagues in all walks of life, being forced to find their own way through. Fighting the urge to stay in your pjs may be hard but it's worth it to keep your mental health healthy. Here are 21 gems of advice from you to each other.

GENERAL WELLBEING:

1. Remember to stay calm and keep perspective! Start or end the day with grateful for... and looking forward to... It really does put your mind in the right space to keep positive.
2. Keep physically active – make sure you get daily exercise, go for a walk at lunch. If you're isolating with family, find a way to exercise with them. At the very least, run or walk up and down the stairs every hour.
3. Consider meditation and mindfulness to help keep calm and focused.
4. Find online resources that you like such as free workouts, headspace and calming breathing exercises.
5. Don't take in visitors but do call and message people you care about to get plenty of contact with friends – with Zoom or Whatsapp – it will keep you happy.
6. Limit the amount of news you watch. More than two times a day I've noticed has a detrimental effect on my mood.
7. Reach out and help your community and set up community groups to help get shop supplies around.

WORKING FROM HOME WELLBEING:

1. Get dressed as usual and do 15 minutes of activity before you start work (with children if you have them) to get everyone going.
2. Talk to colleagues each day, (Zoom/Webex etc) try for more video calls and less emails so you force more socially interactive conversation.
3. Fight the urge to be chained to your computer. Set up a routine for your day – including regular breaks - and stick to it so you don't feel you're working or on call 24/7.
4. Focus on outcomes not on time worked. Set realistic (low even) expectations for work. Make a priority list and tick jobs off as you go.
5. Get a big screen monitor not just your laptop as it reduces headaches.
6. Don't let IT glitches stress you out.
7. If you have space, create a place for your work so you can leave it at the end of each day. Invest in a proper work desk and chair if you can.

FAMILY HARMONY:

1. Create a structure for your family – setting ground rules and a timetable that includes family and quiet time.
2. Agree ground rules with others in your house and be considerate of others.
3. Keep your home tidy and clean. Clear up at the end of each day so each morning you start a fresh.
4. If you're feeling cooped up and want to escape, try some online sale shopping (in moderation!) I bought new bedding and cushions and my bedroom now feels like a boutique hotel. It's helped me get a good night's sleep too.
5. Buy yourself some flowers, a green plant or a nice candle or listen to some music – anything you enjoy which will give you a little pleasure.
6. Plan evening activities with your housemates, children or virtual games with friends.
7. Be patient and kind to yourself, recognise this is a new situation for everyone and will take time to get used to. You are stronger than you think, try to stay positive, have fun and laugh when you can.
8. Gin!

Stay safe & healthy.

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