

# Dealing with Isolation

## Factsheet



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## *It's natural to feel lonely...*

Feeling lonely is a natural human emotion that we can't avoid. Just like stress or jealousy, it's not necessarily a bad feeling to have as it can trigger beneficial responses. But when you're feeling these emotions chronically, it can start to have repercussions.

When you feel lonely or isolated for a long period, the two 'feel good' neurotransmitters, serotonin and dopamine slow down. This can make you feel low or worried.

Whether you live alone or feel lonely due to lack of social interaction at this unsettling time, there are a number of ways you can manage your feelings and strategies you can use to make coping easier.



### **Get it down on paper**

Writing in a diary each day or journaling will help to process your feelings. Check in with yourself and make a note of how you're feeling, what you're thinking and what you're doing. Focus on gratitude. List all the things you're thankful for and your intentions for the day.



### **Keep a timetable**

Planning the day ahead encourages you to notice the things you can look forward to that bring you joy. This includes self-care and relaxing. No matter how busy you are, or the situation you're facing, it's important that this time is factored in.



### **Step outside if you can**

Natural light increases happiness and focus. And the increase in vitamin D helps to fight depression. Spending time in nature will soothe the mind and help create a sense of calm.



### **Manage your media consumption**

Playing news channels continually in the background while you're working from home, or obsessively checking your phone for social media updates can increase anxiety and stress without you realising. Limit media consumption to set times.



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## *Pre-existing mental health condition?*

The coronavirus outbreak may trigger compulsive thoughts and unhelpful behaviours, especially if you have a pre-existing condition like an anxiety disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder.

The fear of being out of control and unable to tolerate uncertainty are common characteristics for many anxiety disorders.

## *Try the 'Apple' technique to manage your worries...*

**A**cknowledge Notice and acknowledge the uncertainty as it comes to mind.

**P**ause Don't react as you normally do. Don't react at all. Pause and breathe.

**P**ull back Tell yourself this is just the worry talking, and this apparent need for certainty is not helpful and not necessary. It's only a thought or feeling. Don't believe everything you think. Thoughts are not statements or facts.

**L**et go Let go of the thought or feeling. It'll pass. You don't have to respond to them. You might imagine them floating away in a bubble or cloud.

**E**xplore Explore the present moment, because right now, in this moment, all is well. Notice your breathing and the sensations of your breathing. Notice the ground beneath you. Look around and notice what you see, what you hear, what you can touch, what you can smell. Right now. Then shift your focus of attention to something else - on what you need to do, on what you were doing before you noticed the worry or do something else - mindfully with your full attention.



Charities that can help:

**GroceryAid**  
**Anxiety UK**  
**Beat Eating Disorders**  
**Mind**  
**No Panic**  
**OCD Action**

greencore  
group

