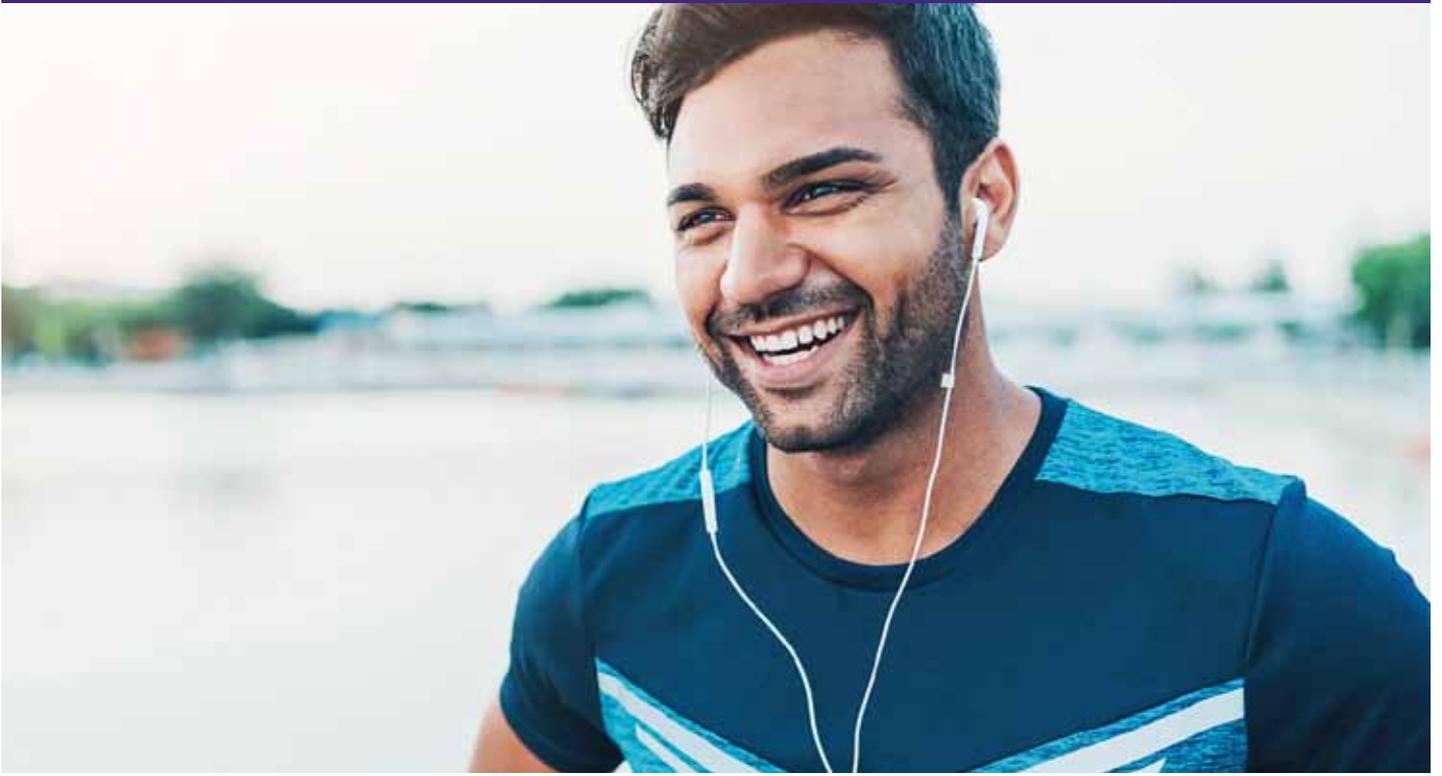


FACT SHEET

Looking after your mental health during Covid-19



Physical isolation and all the challenges of dealing with the current Covid-19 situation can impact on our mental health.

PrEPster (advocators for the provision of PrEP on the NHS in England) asked their twitter followers about what they are doing to cope, and their top tips include:

Create a routine

- If you are someone who needs a routine, try to allocate your time in a way that allows you to have a routine with things in this list. Not having any routine for hours or days on end can make you feel low. If you can, try to keep a routine as close to your previous routine as possible.
- That might include setting an alarm in the morning so you get up at regular times, instead of staying in bed; getting dressed in to 'day' clothes; having meals at regular times; and having a regular bed time and sleep pattern.
- If you are taking regular medicines, try to stick to your usual routine. If you are struggling to take regular medicines, it is important to talk to your GP or prescribing centre for support.

Eat and drink

- Drink lots of water and stay hydrated.
- Try and eat regularly and as healthily as you can afford to.
- This is a great time to experiment with cooking, trying new recipes and experimenting with different food.
- If you drink alcohol, keep an eye on the amount you are drinking. If you are concerned about the amount you are drinking or think you are over relying on alcohol you can find some help here:

Calderdale Recovery Steps, Drug and Alcohol Services – 01422 415550

or

CHART Kirklees, Drug and Alcohol Services – 01484 353333

Give yourself a break

- Take the pressure off yourself to be productive – we are in a pandemic and it is OK not to be working or studying full on. Be forgiving to yourself and those around you.
- Consider decreasing your news intake. Delete news apps and unsubscribe from newsletters. This could be a way to manage anxiety caused by constant negative stories. If you must, watch one news programme a day on a mainstream channel or a 24-hour news channel. You could also ask friends who are sharing links about the pandemic to stop.

Get it all out

- Create a journal or write down your thoughts and feelings.
- Call a friend and talk through how things are going.
- Put some headphones on and blast out your favourite music.
- Masturbate, or buy a flesh-light or dildo.
- Take some exercise.
- If you are feeling anxious during this time, exercising, yoga or meditating could be good. Practicing one of these when you wake up could be good as it sets you up for the day.
- If you can, make use of local parks, or head out for a brief walk round the block. A change of environment can be a huge stress relief.
- Give your brain a workout with things like puzzles, crosswords, and games.

Take some exercise

- If you are feeling anxious during this time, exercising, yoga or meditating could be good. Practicing one of these when you wake up could be good as it sets you up for the day.
- If you can, make use of local parks, or head out for a brief walk round the block. A change of environment can be a huge stress relief.
- Give your brain a workout with things like puzzles, crosswords, and games.

During Covid-19 it is important to look after yourself – it is okay to focus on your wellbeing. Allow yourself to feel your feelings and try to remember that this situation is temporary and will end. We will all cope differently and use different ways to help ourselves and others through this.

Support

If you are in crisis and would prefer to someone right now here are some agencies you can phone:

Samaritans are there to listen, not judge, 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **Freephone 116 123**.

Under 35s can also call the **Papyrus HOPELINK on 0800 068 4141** (Mon-Fri 10am to 10pm, and weekends 2pm to 10pm) or **text to 07860 039967**.

The **LGBT Foundation** also runs a helpline from 9am to 9pm Mon-Fri, and 10am until 6pm on Sat **on 0345 3 30 30 30**.

If you are living with HIV in Calderdale or Kirklees, **The Brunswick Centre** can offer online/phone support/counselling, **contact Steve on 07976 402198**.

The Brunswick Centre can also offer phone/online/counselling support to Gay, Bisexual and other men who have sex with men resident in Calderdale and Kirklees who are not living with HIV but would like some support, **contact Anne on 07703 187976**.

