

COVID-19: Tips for self-care

The coronavirus pandemic is leaving many of us feeling anxious, even more uncertain about the future than usual and as if everything is out of our control.

While we cannot control what other people do or the global spread of the virus, there are things we can do to take back some control in our lives - It's a really important time to practise self-care and to look after ourselves, so we can protect our own mental health and wellbeing.

You may find the below tips useful -

Mind:

We know that stress exacerbates many conditions. The mind-body connection is complicated and the more we can do to support our health and wellbeing, the better.

Breathing:

Think about your breathing - Is it shallow - from the top of the lungs? Coming from the middle of the lungs? A deeper belly breath? If it feels OK to do so, aim to lower the breath as if breathing from the belly as this is calming and will help you stay focused on it. Now get a sense of the length of each breath. Is the inhale longer? Exhale longer?

Some people like to count (in for one, out for two or three or a ratio that feels good for you) or simply get a sense of a slightly longer exhalation. Each time your mind wanders, congratulate yourself for noticing and bring the awareness back to the breath. Aim for five minutes but even one minute is helpful.

Grounding tools:

Grounding tools are ways in which we connect with the healing, nourishing earth energy that is supporting us with each breath and step we take. Pause to notice the parts of the body that are currently in contact with the ground. Sense each part. Feel that support. Imagine roots as if you were a tree going deep into the heart of the earth from these parts of the body.

Breathe in that grounding, nourishing and supportive energy. If it feels good, release some of your worries into these roots with the next exhale, giving them to the earth to recycle and heal for you. Breathe up nourishing, resourceful, empowering, supportive energy. Repeat as often as you can.

Use all your senses:

You can use all your senses to notice where you are. You might want to notice five things you can see right now.

What can you hear right now? Any smells or tastes? Another simple grounding tool is to inhale as you tense the thighs and exhale as you release them. These can help us resist the well-worn neural pathways around catastrophizing and feeling helpless.

Exercise:

This might be an opportunity to shake up your routine - Get out for a walk, Do more of your yoga (or whatever you love) at home. All of these things can help to give you a greater sense of wellbeing.

Fruit and veg:

No toilet rolls in supermarkets is only an issue if you've run out at home! How would it feel to stock up on your favourite fruits and veg? To spend some time nourishing 'Future You' by batch cooking then freezing portions of smoothies and soups and other nutritious meals? It can be very reassuring to know you've taken steps to look after 'Future You'.