

# KEEP CALM AND STAY SAFE

## Information

There will be lots of new and technical terms, information and stories being shared about coronavirus (Covid-19). It is important to only follow official sources and share the medical advice given by the NHS. Sharing or following advice from other sources could put you and others around you at more risk.

Reading too much about the virus can make us worried and anxious so think about reading just a few headlines each day and limiting what you see.

**Here are some definitions you might see/hear in the media:**

## Coronavirus:

Coronaviruses are a large group of different viruses. Each one is slightly different, but they can all cause issues to your respiratory system, which is what helps you breathe. This can range from something like the common cold, to more serious infections or diseases.

## Quarantine:

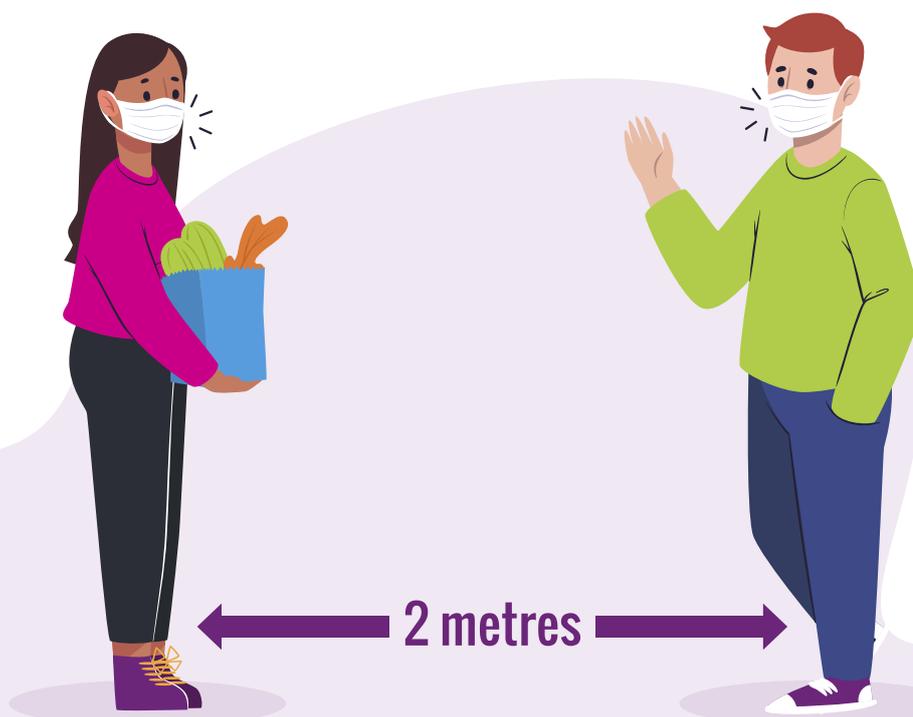
This involves people staying at home or another location to make sure that disease isn't spread. You don't need to have symptoms of the disease to be quarantined; it may be that you have travelled from a country that has a lot of cases of coronavirus and they need to make sure you're not carrying it.

## Social Distancing:

This involves staying further away from people to make sure that people don't become unwell. It can mean simply standing further away from people in a queue or avoiding going to busy places such as concerts or restaurants. You will see lots of social distancing signs if you go out asking people to keep 2 metres away from the next person.

## Self-isolation:

This is when someone stays away from other people to make sure they don't spread infections to others. This normally means staying at home and not going outside or having visitors to your home.



# CHALLENGES OR CONCERNS

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## Loss and Bereavement

Some young people may have relatives or friends who have passed away during the lockdown period, either due to coronavirus or other illnesses. Many more will have been aware of a relative or friend being seriously unwell or hospitalised. For other young people, there will have been other types of loss - for example, parents who have been furloughed or lost their job, a home and/or school move, or they may have experienced long-term isolation from important people in their life, such as grandparents.

Regardless of the type of loss, many will be experiencing this with a sense of grief. The way that children and young people respond to those feelings of loss and grief will differ widely - some may seem sad or withdrawn, others may appear anxious or angry.

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## Challenging Experiences at Home

Many children and young people entered lockdown in already challenging home environments. These challenging circumstances will likely have been amplified by families being at home together. Others will have faced these challenging experiences for the first time. These might include, but are not limited to:

- Domestic violence
- Abuse or neglect
- Family conflict
- Financial concerns, e.g. loss of employment for parents and guardians
- Worry about relatives who are key workers and continuing to work
- Caring responsibilities for family members
- Hunger and lack of nutrition
- Insecure housing, e.g. those living in residential care, hostels or refuges.

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## Transitions

As the lockdown period is likely to span the end of one school year, the usual preparation that would be done with all pupils for their transition to the next school year will be lacking. This will be particularly challenging for children who were starting school, moving from primary to secondary school and those who are leaving school.

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## Friendships and Bullying

Over a lengthy period of social distancing, friendships may have become strained or deteriorated. Many young people will have communicated with friends over social media, while others will have had little contact with their peers. As peer groups are an important source of support for young people, this may mean that many will have lacked a vital source of support in managing the stresses of the lockdown period.

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## Exams

Many young people have had their GCSEs, A-Levels or other exams cancelled because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. As exams can cause stress and anxiety, for some people, this might bring some relief and leave them feeling happier and healthier with less strain on their mental health.

For others, however, this will cause a lot of upset. Young people have worked extremely hard and made a lot of sacrifices so not being able to sit their exams and receive their final results can cause a lot of stress and anxiety as it might impact on university and course choices.

Always remember that your hard work is never wasted. Be proud of how far you've come and celebrate your achievements. This situation is tough but it doesn't make you or your hard work worth any less.

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## Safer at Home

For some children and young people, unfortunately school does not feel like a safe place to be and the lockdown will have been a welcome respite. For these pupils, returning to school will be a challenge. This may particularly be the case for young people with physical and learning difficulties, whose needs may be more easily met at home.

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## Uncertainty about the future

The sudden and unprecedented changes that the lockdown imposed on everyone are likely to have left many young people feeling uncertain about the future. For some, this will be a fear of a second lockdown, for others it will be a general sense that things that used to feel safe and predictable, such as school, may no longer be something they can rely on.

There may be a lack of confidence amongst young people in the adults in their lives. As they may have seen adults struggle to agree about how to manage the crisis, their sense that they can rely on adults to keep them safe may have been diminished.

You can always contact our e-mentors:  
[mentorsonline@bulliesout.com](mailto:mentorsonline@bulliesout.com)

# LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

## Stress Management:

Here are a few strategies that might help you relive stress:

1. Try and have a structure. Sticking to a familiar daily routine might help you feel safe and secure.
2. Although it's important to keep up to date with what is happening, too much information can be stressful. Try and limit what you see and read to around 10 minutes each day. Try and read/watch/do as many positive things as possible.
3. It's hard to avoid negative thinking at this time, especially if you are spending time with others who are negative and listening to fake news etc. But try to challenge negative thinking. This doesn't mean to say that you pretend this is not happening, just don't engage with the negative thoughts. When you have one, just focus on what you can do about the situation and what you have to be grateful for. Why not download and complete our Gratitude Journal <https://bulliesout.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Gratitude-Journal.pdf>
4. Yoga, Mindfulness and Meditation are not the same but all are a great way of helping to keep calm, patient and less stressed. There are lots of free apps available and videos on YouTube. Just find the right one for you.
5. Exercise is a great way to ease stress. Although we have to socially distance when we go out, you are still able to go for a walk, run or a cycle ride. Listen to your favourite music or podcast whilst exercising.

As long as you abide by the regulations, you can go with a friend and catch up with each other. Try and keep to a daily routine as much as you can. It really will help you feel better.

## Eat Healthy

A treat every now and then doesn't hurt anyone, but throughout lockdown, many people found their eating habits had changed - especially when stressed. Why not try cooking something new? There are lots of great recipes online you can follow or why not 'cook' with a friend via facetime.

## Stay Connected

Technology is a great way to keep in touch with family and friends and the media has been full of amazing videos of people face-timing during lockdown.

If you have a smart phone, why not schedule some face time chats or Zoom meetings with your friends? Check in with them regularly and whenever you can, help those in your life who may be more vulnerable. Those who live alone, can't shop online or who struggle to use a smart phone would be thrilled to have someone help them. It would make you feel good too.

Connect with the people you live with. We're usually all so busy with our individual interests it can be quite hard so this is an ideal time to improve our existing relationships.

There has been a huge amount of change to daily life and it's not realistic to expect to be as productive as you were before. If you feel a bit unmotivated or haven't done as much as usual, that's okay. Lots of things feel uncertain right now so focus on what you can control and this might help everything feel a bit more manageable.

