

Coping with COVID



Ideas and Advice from our
Young Ambassadors

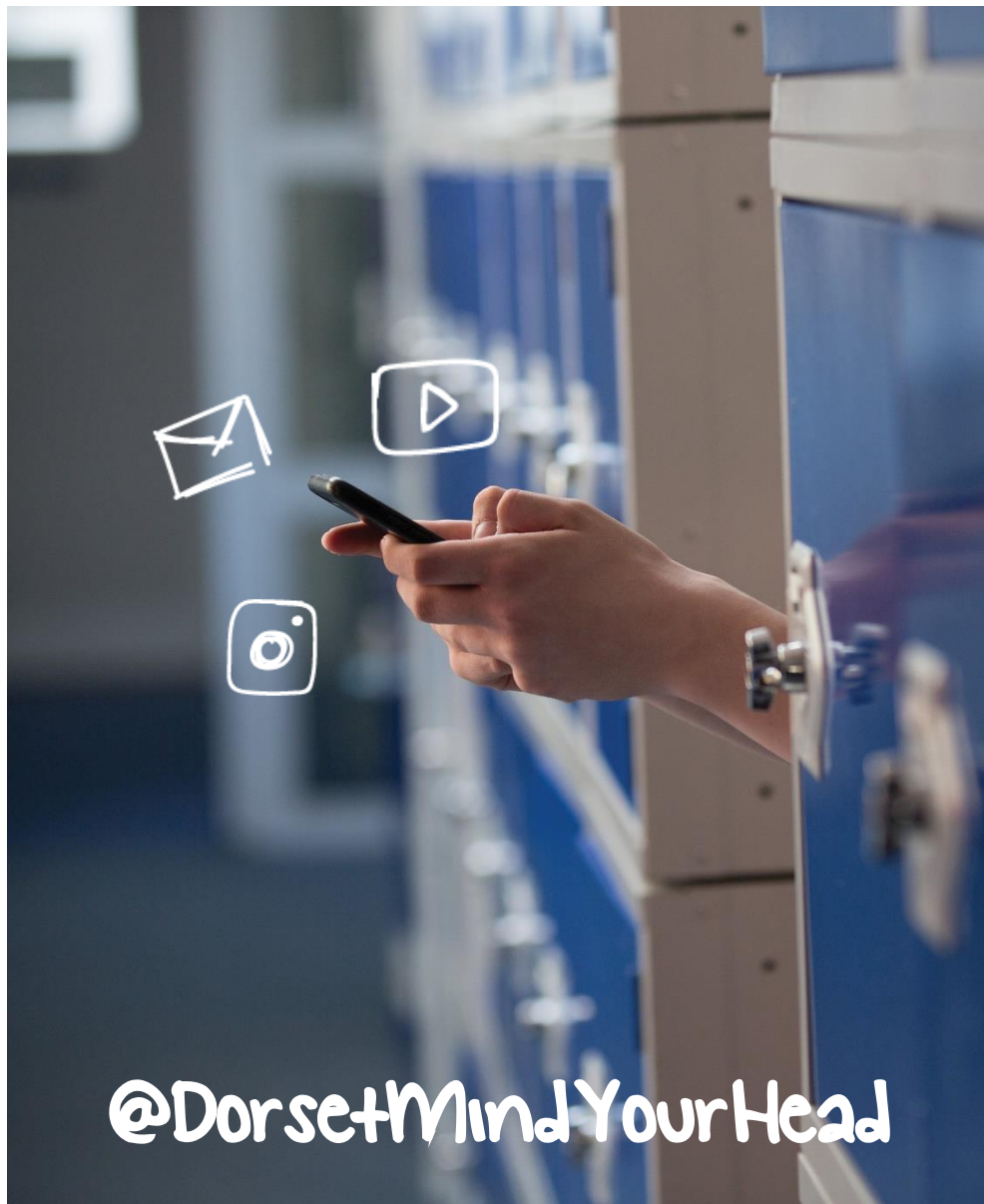
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Introduction

COVID-19 has caused some new and unusual situations for all of us. Whether you have had to start home schooling, stop seeing your friends, or are unable to go to work- it has all impacted our lives in different ways. In this booklet, our Young Ambassadors discuss the different situations you may have experienced, or are experiencing, and give you tips and advice to help keep you happy and mentally healthy.

For more information about looking after your mental well-being and to find support, visit our website at DorsetMindYourHead.uk or follow us on Instagram [@DorsetMindYourHead](https://www.instagram.com/DorsetMindYourHead).



Fighting Boredom

Becky



In our 'Fighting Boredom' video, Becky suggests a range of activities you can do to keep yourself busy during lockdown or after school:

Sometimes the feeling of boredom comes from feeling disconnected from what you're doing.

Watch the full video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nv4dtmfRM4> or go to the **Dorset Mind** YouTube channel.

Resources

Book recommendations:

<https://www.waterstones.com/category/childrens-teenage/teen-and-young-adult>

Create a free Zoom account here:

<https://zoom.us/signin>

Some COVID activity ideas

<https://www.achievetogether.co.uk/activities-during-covid-19/>

The Headspace app offers some great guided meditations

<https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>

Signposting

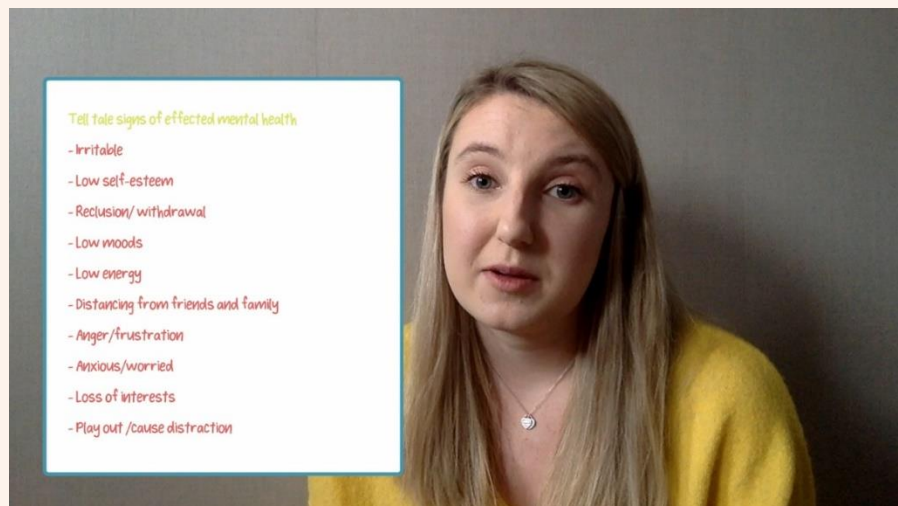
Every Mind Matters

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

Their resource centre is full of free materials you can order, or download, to look after your mental health.

School Work

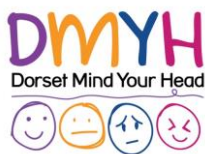
Emily



Emily's schoolwork video explores the effect that schoolwork can have on own mental health and how we can maintain our mental well-being while not becoming overwhelmed by our workload.

You should never feel that your mental health is affecting your schoolwork, or that your schoolwork is affecting your mental health.

Watch the full video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hntyj0uNWZ4> or go to the **Dorset Mind** YouTube channel.



Resources

Support with schoolwork:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

Support with learning difficulties:

<https://www.special-education-degree.net/top-12-websites-children-learning-disabilities/>

Fun learning:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXVCgDuD_QCkl7gTKU7-tpg

Signposting

Dorset Mind offers a range of support groups where you can meet other young people feeling the same way. To find out more, visit [DorsetMindYourHead.uk](https://www.dorsetmindyourhead.org.uk)

Mosaic Supporting Bereaved Children

<https://mosaicfamilysupport.org/>

Mosaic is a Dorset wide charity offering a pathway of support to bereaved children, young people and their families.

Autism Wessex

<https://www.autismwessex.org.uk/>

Our services are available to anyone who needs it - people with autism and associated difficulties, families and professionals. Anyone affected by autism can rely on us for support.

The Mix

<https://www.themix.org.uk/>

The Mix is a support site for under 25s, with lots of useful info on everything such as sex, exam stress, debt and drugs, plus a confidential phone line.

Preparing for A Levels

Georgia



For Year 11's, lockdown has meant missing out on many things, including taster days for 6th form. Moving onto A-levels is already daunting enough, without the added uncertainty of current events.

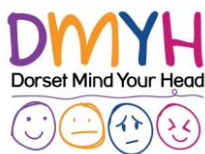
To make the transition slightly easier, many schools are hosting virtual taster days and Q&A sessions on platforms such as Zoom. If you have these opportunities definitely participate, as having even a few familiar faces will make going to school in September slightly less nerve-wracking. If you can, reach out to new classmates via social media, especially if you don't know anyone going to your 6th form.

As GCSE's were cancelled, we have a lot of spare time which would normally be used for revision. Use this time as an opportunity to get ahead: find out about your exam boards and curriculums, and maybe email teachers asking if there is any work you can be doing. Any background knowledge will be useful when it comes to settling into your courses.

Remember that every year 11 is in the same boat, it is normal to be nervous, but there are many ways you can try to make the prospect of A levels positive, rather than negative.

Resources

Find out more about your upcoming subjects:



<https://studywise.co.uk/a-level-revision/>

<https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision>

<https://studyrrocket.co.uk/>

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/preparing-for-university/Prospective-Student-Hub/year-11/revision-resources.aspx>

Signposting

Number 18

<https://www.upinpoole.co.uk/>

Number 18, located in Poole Town centre, provides confidential information and advice for Young People aged 12 to 19 (or 25 if they have a special educational need).

Kooth

<https://www.kooth.com/>

Kooth is an online mental wellbeing community. Access free, safe and anonymous support.

Mood Juice

<http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/>

Offers a range of support and advice on to help you think about emotional problems and work towards solving them.

Stress Management Society

<http://www.stress.org.uk/>

Information about stress and tips on how to cope.

Preparing for University

Olivia



So, you've got into university. All the hard work has finally paid off and now you're preparing for the most exciting transition yet. The problem: with transitions comes uncertainty, uncertainty can lead to stress and anxiety. This is completely normal, but hopefully after reading this you'll have a good idea of how to keep this to the minimum. This transition should also be exciting, and a clearer mind will help you see it like this.

Hi guys, I'm Olivia. I've just completed my first year at university so I can relate to a lot of the mix of emotions you're feeling right now, and now I'm on the other side of it, I've developed an understanding of what worked and what could have made that entire transition easier. Everyone has different experiences with starting university, so I got in touch with my new uni friends and asked what helped them. So hopefully, there will be the perfect mix of advice and all of you reading this will be able to come away with some helpful tips.

Believe in Yourself

As cringey as it may sound, it's really important to recognise how capable you are of dealing with the situation at hand. Sometimes the reason why we can over-evaluate possible outcomes of a situation, is because we don't believe in ourselves sufficiently enough to realise that whatever the eventual outcome is, we are strong enough to cope and adapt. Even if you don't, I know you are strong enough as you have already faced the biggest change society has faced in years with COVID-19, and trust me, starting university is nothing in comparison. So, you've got this.

Self-care

Self-care was the point I noted from *all* of my friends. They all had their own way of doing this of course, because as it says in the name it is all about your *self*. But, there's definitely some essentials when it comes to self-care which during the busier days ahead can be forgivingly easy to forget, those things include: ensuring you meet with your loved ones whom you may not see for a while, fit in meals, and treat yourself, regardless of the size, to remind yourself how much of an achievement it is to be where you are.

Peer Pressure

I was probably most nervous about peer pressure during fresher's week in terms of going out, drinking, etc. Personally, it's never been my thing but what I'd seen online, and heard from others, it seemed like something I would feel I had to participate in. But guess what? You absolutely do not. I was so surprised at how many people were just like me and would rather go out for a meal so you can just chat to people and get to know them. Essentially, whatever your likes and dislikes are, there will be people there who share them, so never feel pressured into doing something. One of my friends advised to push yourself out of your comfort zone a little in terms of social situations, for example going into your kitchen to meet your flat mates, but never feel you have to push yourself to do things that actually make yourself feel particularly uncomfortable.

Things to Physically Prepare for:

Note-Taking

Notetaking was something I didn't really think about and ended up starting uni with a laptop I wasn't even aware was packing up and spent the first couple months, unnecessarily stressed about sorting out finding a new one. So, avoid it and have a think about what methods may work best with you. Then think about what equipment or software you will need to do so. On YouTube, there are tonnes of 'Studytubers' who share their own ways to take notes and can give you some useful pointers if you're not sure. I would also recommend OneNote if you are using a laptop (which I also recommend in order to keep up) as this is completely free, you don't need the Office package, and it is so easy to use. Whatever software etc. you do decide to use, have a go at using it so when you set up for your first lecture, you're ready to go!

Meals

Do some research for some super basic meals or grab yourself a student cookbook. One of my flatmates was far from a chef but brought with him a cookbook called – NOSH, which is specifically made for students. There are definitely others out there that are super inexpensive and there's even some for fellow vegetarians & vegans if that suits you better. I think it's important to have a couple of super speedy recipes to hand so that you always have something you can make up after a long day at uni – eating some hearty meals is also the best way to avoid the dreaded fresher's flu!

Things to Research About Your Particular University:

Societies

Societies are in mine and my uni friends' opinion, the best way to meet people and make friends, because you already share a common interest based on whatever that society is for. It also takes the pressure off making friends with your flat mates – this is something I was particularly nervous about and even some of my friends, but having other places to meet people can help to remind yourself: whilst it's a bonus to get on with your flat mates, it's not the end of the world.

The Wellbeing System

This was one of the best things I did before starting uni. I spent some time researching the wellbeing system so that I knew exactly who to contact if I needed it. When I did end up needing it, it took the pressure of massively knowing where I could find help and made me turn to that help a lot faster than I otherwise would have done. It doesn't matter how 'big' or 'small' you perceive that problem to be (if it even is a specific problem), turn to support whenever there is even a slight dip in your mental wellbeing, because your physical and mental health should always be your top priority, regardless of how many uni deadlines you may have.

Resources

Extra tips for managing student life

<https://dorsetmindyourhead.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Quick-Tips-Student-Life.pdf>

Signposting

Student Minds

<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/>

Student Minds is the UK's student mental health charity. They empower students and members of the university community to look after their own mental health, support others and create change.

Anxiety UK

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>

Advice and support for people living with anxiety, stress and anxiety-based depression. It has an info line, text service and digital online therapy service (subscription required).

Stressbusting

<http://www.stressbusting.co.uk/>

Information about stress and techniques for coping. Lists several talking treatments and alternative therapies that can be used to treat stress.

Burn Out and Stress

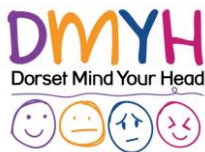
Rosie



At different stages of your school life you may feel pressure to work particularly hard, especially when you come back to school after the summer holidays, in your upcoming GCSE's/ A levels, or when you need to meet deadlines for your next piece of homework. You may feel like you are stretching yourself too thin, making yourself more anxious or tired than usual. But I can assure you that you are definitely not the only one feeling like this and there are plenty of ways to tackle this!

Some common ways you may feel the effects of burning out are feeling exhausted no matter how much sleep you get, lacking confidence in your abilities, lacking motivation, and an increase in headaches. If you're feeling these affects, you may want to reevaluate your work-life balance. As important as your academic life may be, your friends and family want to enjoy time with you! It is key to complete your deadlines, but make sure you take some space out of every day and dedicate it to what you enjoy. That might be reading, going on a run, talking to your friends, painting, or even winding down and having a long, warm bubble bath. Self-care is very underrated and is very important for your wellbeing.

I'm not a sporty person and this is probably a little hypercritical but get plenty of exercise! This is scientifically proven to improve your mood and help get rid of your anxiety. Physical activity of any kind such as going on a run, walking your dog, doing some yoga, playing tennis with your friends, increases your body's endorphin levels, this 'feel good chemical' produces feelings of euphoria and happiness. Getting outside and doing exercise also allows you to have a break



and to get out of your workspace environment therefore giving yourself a change of scenery!

However, some quick tips which have helped me massively when I have felt the pressures and stress of school life would be to stay organised. This could mean writing to do lists or tidying your room or consider taking up a new hobby. But, most importantly, make sure you make time for your friends and yourself. Make time to have fun!

Resources

7 Simple Tips to Reduce Your Stress Right Now

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDecu0ME1Zo>

Signposting

Stress Management Society

<http://www.stress.org.uk/>

Information about stress and tips on how to cope.

Moodgym

<https://moodgym.com.au/>

MoodGym is a free, interactive programme to help young people with low mood.

Staying in Touch with Friends

Vicky



Hi, I'm Vicky and I'm one of the Young Ambassadors at Dorset Mind. Today I'm going to give you a few tips and ideas of ways you can stay close to your friends at the moment. Just remember, any suggestions, always keep in mind government guidelines and social distancing.

You could try going to one of the many open spaces we have for a nice walk with your friends.



You could even try going on a day trip and hiring a boat (with your parent's permission!).



Another thing you could try is doing baking over face time, do a bit of a Bake Off!



Or even those weekly Zoom quizzes.



Or try a phone call.



Of course, when you meet up with your friends it's going to be a bit different than it used to be, but we can all learn to adapt and, as long as you're finding ways to stay in communication with each other, even if it is over facetime or Zoom, or if you can meet up for a socially distanced natter in the park, any way to keep that communication and friendship going is perfect.

Resources

Dorset Walks

<https://www.visit-dorset.com/things-to-do/activities/walking/walking-routes>

Baking Recipes

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/baking-recipes>

Signposting

Epic Friends.co.uk

Epic Friends is a site designed to help young people to help their friends who might be struggling emotionally.

Difficult Family Situations

Lydia



The Lockdown has affected everyone in lots of different ways. However, being confined to your own household for some families in particular has created conflicts that sometimes seem too stressful to handle. But there are things you can do to help. We can't control most of the difficult situations that life throws at us, but there are things we can do to help deal with the stress and anxiety it causes us.

When life at home feels out of control and you feel helpless, think about the things that you can control and can help. For example, keeping to a day-to-day routine can help things feel more organised, and you can set yourself small, achievable goals for each day to motivate yourself. Whether it's exercise, schoolwork or helping out around the house, keeping productive is key to looking after your mental wellbeing throughout these difficult times. Looking after your physical health can also help with this.

Consider your habits around eating, drinking and sleeping and ask yourself if there are small changes you can make that can help look after yourself better. You can check out the following Youtube video for more tips and advice on this or see further resources for greater support and advice on Dorset Mind's website page.

Resources

'10 Tips for Coping with Stress During Lockdown'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HyOCpy97GW0>

Some tips on coping with anger:

<https://dorsetmindyourhead.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Quick-Tips-Anger.pdf>

Signposting

Number 18

<https://www.upinpoole.co.uk/>

Number 18, located in Poole Town centre, provides confidential information and advice for Young People aged 12 to 19 (or 25 if they have a special educational need).

Samaritans.org

(Freephone 116 123 - 24 hours, 7 days a week)

Volunteers listen in confidence to anyone in any type of emotional distress, without judging or telling people what to do.

Kooth.com

Kooth is a free online counselling service for children and young people. Only available in certain parts of England and Wales.

Fearfighter

<http://fearfighter.cbtprogram.com/>

A computer-based CBT (CCBT) programme for treating panic and phobias (subscription required).

Mind Tools

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_TCS.htm#Anger%20Management

Provides further information on anger, anger management tips as well as information on how to communicate in a respectful and still assertive way.

Mood Juice

<http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/>

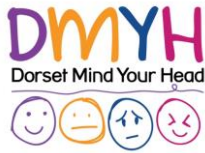
Offers a range of support and advice on to help you think about emotional problems and work towards solving them.

Stress Management Society

<http://www.stress.org.uk/>

Information about stress and tips on how to cope.

Stressbusting



<http://www.stressbusting.co.uk/>

Information about stress and techniques for coping. Lists several talking treatments and alternative therapies that can be used to treat stress.

Support Line

<http://www.supportline.org.uk>

Helpline: **01708 765200**.

Support Line is a telephone helpline which provides young people with confidential and emotional support on issues surrounding anger, self-harm, abuse and relationships.

5 Ways to Well Being

Alice



The way we might go about keeping mentally healthy may have had to change during time away from school and being in lockdown but there are still ways to balance your mental health. The five ways to wellbeing are a starting point to thinking about what you need in your life to feel yourself. These can take so many different forms but can be grouped around 5 things.

1. Connect
2. Give
3. Active
4. Learning
5. Take notice

Top tips:

- Make each way to wellbeing work for you and fit with what you're interested in and what brings you calm- it's not about anyone else.
- You can fit these into how much time you have, whether it's sending a quick message, planning a day out, or learning to bake something: what matters is finding a way to fit into your life.
- Try and be problem solving, if you can't do something one way, what else could you try?

Connect – Talking is brave and it is healthy. Find a way to do this that you're comfortable with; for example if phoning too much try texting.

Give – Giving to others can help us feel better about ourselves. There are plenty of ways to volunteer virtually as well as in person. We can also help the people more directly in our lives, like family or friends.

- How about making a self-care box for someone you care about?
- Send a card/ treat someone
- Ask someone how they are, give them a listening ear

Active – The groups or places we might do exercise may have changed, perhaps instead think of new things to try or if there is anything you've always wished you had done in the past? Exercise can be something that brings you calm, it doesn't matter what you do or how you do it.

Learning – With school, learning can become mixed up with expectations and result, instead, make sure you make time to learn the things you're interested in, do activities just for you. This could be learning new skills like art, writing, baking or finding out about something you're curious about.

Take Notice – Mindfulness has become a buzzword of late, but this can be an opportunity to check in with yourself and bring yourself back from worries about the future to the present moment.

Resources

Websites to get some inspiration for learning something new

<https://www.ted.com/talks>

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk>

Grounding Techniques and meditations

<https://www.beautyafterbruises.org/blog/grounding101>

<https://chrisgermer.com/meditations/>

Check out <https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/> for some self-care ideas.

Tips for talking about your mental health to your parents

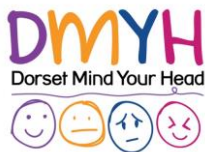
<https://www.ditchthelabel.org/talking-parents-mental-health/>

Resources: mental health podcast

<https://open.spotify.com/show/4P86ZzHf7EOIRG7do9LkKZ> Brene Brown

Signposting

Shout Crisis text support for any age 24/7 <https://www.giveusashout.org>



Cool2talk

<https://cool2talk.org> Cool2talk and one2one provide a safe space where young people can get their questions answered accurately and without judgement. We respond to all questions within 24 hours.

Volunteering in Dorset

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/youth-link/education-and-work/volunteering-for-young-people.aspx>

For More Information

For more information about mental health, and how Dorset Mind can support your mental wellbeing, visit:

DorsetMindYourHead.uk

@DorsetMindYourHead