

Coronavirus Anxiety

# Your Self Help Survival Guide

Brought to you by

**Dr Jenn Cooper**

Chartered Counselling  
Psychologist

## Coronavirus Anxiety

# Your Self Help Survival Guide

**It is strange, uncertain and worrying times, and whatever you are feeling in relation to it is valid and OK.**

This self help guide has been designed to give you practical and immediately implementable strategies to help manage any anxiety or distress that Covid-19 is causing. However, these tools can also be utilised in any other anxiety provoking scenarios.

I do hope that this resource will be of value and bring you a sense of calm and control in a world where we seem to have so little control.

Please feel free to share this FREE resource FAR and WIDE so that those who need to see it, will see it.

### **About the Author:**

Dr Jenn Cooper is a Chartered Counselling Psychologist with over 10 years experience. Dr Jenn Cooper is a lecturer and Stage Co-ordinator with the D.Psych Counselling Psychology Programme at Glasgow Caledonian University.



# Manage your worry



## Write it down

Worry can grow arms and legs when left to bounce around in our brains. Write your worries down to create a bit of space and objectivity.



## Analyse the evidence

Look for the evidence for and against the thought. Imagine you are in a court of law, would your evidence for the thought stand up in court? Can you challenge the evidence you identify as 'for' the thought?



## Problem solve

Now that you've identified the worry and have analysed the evidence, break down the problem. What will give you the most difficulties? What might help? Who might help? What do you need to solve the problem?



## Sleep

Good sleep hygiene is essential for us all, all of the time. When we are well rested, we are happier, more rational and more in control individuals. Worry can be a real hurdle for this so try out some of these strategies for improving your sleep:

- Set a bedtime and stick to it
- Create an environment that is good for your sleep – cool, dark, free of stimulation
- Wind down – establish a chilled bedtime routine
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine and exercise too close to bedtime
- Write down your bedtime routine and work BACKWARDS!

# Your worry action plan



**My worries are**

- .
- .
- .
- .
- .



**What's the evidence**

For the worry:

- .
- .
- .
- .
- .

Against the worry:

- .
- .
- .
- .
- .



**What's the problem?**

The problem:

The parts:

- .
- .
- .

Solve it:

- .
- .
- .



**Sleep**

Bedtime:

Bedtime routine:

- .
- .
- .
- .
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# Information management



## **Choose your sources**

It is so important, especially right now, that we are choosing our information sources wisely. Make sure that you are using reliable, research based and objective sources such as: WHO; NHS; Gov.uk ; Health Protection Scotland.



## **Choose a time**

As well as choosing the correct sources, try to avoid bombarding yourself with information. Remain up to date and informed but be in control of what you see. Choose a specific time that you are going to check (the correct) sources.



## **Limit yourself**

Set yourself a time limit for checking your chosen sources to stop yourself getting lost down the rabbit hole and becoming overwhelmed.



## **Information management plan**

Sources:

At (time):

For (length):

Make a commitment and stick to it!



# Communication



## Does this make me anxious?

We can't get away from talking about it, but that doesn't mean we need to be talking about it with everyone. Check in with yourself about whether certain conversations with certain people make you feel better or worse.



## Assert yourself

If a conversation is making you feel worse or anxious or uncomfortable, generate a statement you can use to stop the conversation e.g. "I'm sorry but I would prefer to not talk about this as it makes me feel very anxious"; distract the conversation or walk away if you need to.



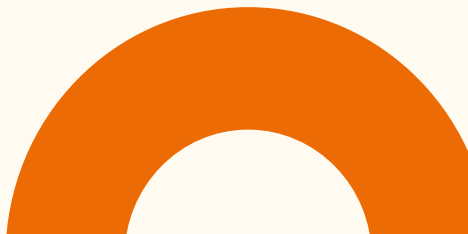
## Social media

Control what you see on your feed. Unfollow anyone who makes you feel worse or more anxious. Identify the accounts that make you feel better, bring joy, distraction or reassurance. Remember you are in charge of what you see!



## Talk it through

It is important that you have people who you trust and can talk through some of your worries and concerns with. Be that a good friend, your partner, mum, a professional; or helpline identifying the people who you can talk to will make it easier to approach them when you feel the need to.



# Communication plan



**Rate your conversations**

Conversations about:

With:

Make me feel:

- ☐ Better
- ☐ OK
- ☐ Worse



**Assert yourself**

Assertive statement:

Distraction topics:

- .
- .
- .



**My go to accounts**

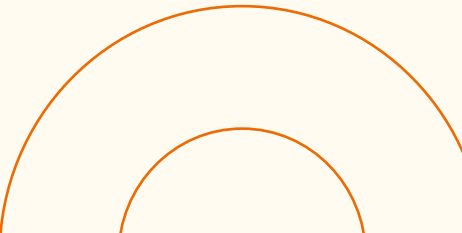
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**My go to people**

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# Perspective



## Negative thinking

Undoubtedly, you will be having numerous thoughts about what is going on, and very few of these will be positive. When we get bogged down in the negative thoughts, however we get caught in some common thinking traps:

- **Catastrophising:**  
Everything is going to be terrible forever
- **All or nothing:**  
Everything is perfect or everything is terrible
- **Bias:**  
There is only terrible things happening



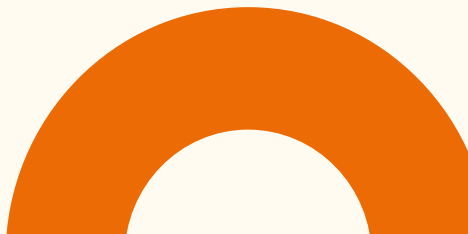
## Perspective

Gaining some perspective on these thinking traps can be a really helpful tool, not only to see the 'whole picture' but also to shift this cycle.



## Shift it

- Asking yourself and others what the best part of the day was?
- What one good thing happened today?
- What 3 things have you got to feel grateful for today?
- What went well today?
- What has improved today?
- What was the funniest part of the day?
- What did you enjoy today?





# Shift your perspective



**The best part**



**One good thing**



**Gratitude attitude**

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# Isolation



## **Pit falls**

- Lack of routine
- Bad habits (eating, sleeping, moving)
- Loneliness
- Boredom
- Relationships



## **Routine**

As much as possible, maintain a 'normal' routine. Get up, get dressed, eat regularly, set goals for the day, create a schedule.



## **Loneliness**

It will be lonely, but we've never faced this kind of challenge at a better time with the age of technology. Use Skype, FaceTime, Social Media. Get creative... meet your friends for a virtual coffee – make the time as you would in 'real life'.



## **Move**

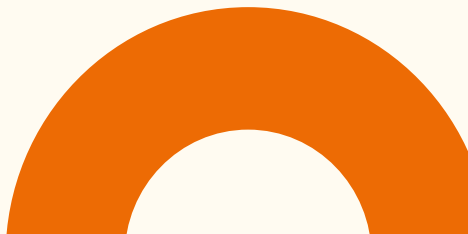
- Get out in the garden for some fresh air
- Use online exercise videos e.g the body coach
- Play physical games with the kids
- Dance around the living room



## **Boredom**

Use this time as an opportunity to get stuff done that you've been putting off:

- Learn something new
- Get the house sorted
- Catch up on Netflix



# Isolation



## My potential pit falls

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## Daily routine

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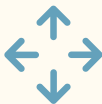


## Combat loneliness

Coffee date with:

Schedule calls with:

Social media groups:



## Movement plan

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## Overcome boredom

My goals for isolation are:

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# Relationships



## **The challenge**

We are not designed to spend significant amounts of time with the same people... it is going to get difficult in family isolations. It is important to acknowledge this and identify the possible problems before they occur.



## **Family meeting**

Sit down together and identify the possible challenges you all might experience in the isolation. Write it down as a family and problem solve as a family!



## **Boundaries**

Set clear boundaries, both for yourself and for each other. Make these really explicit, write them down, and consider how you might all enforce these. Create separate places to work. Set limits on work/interruptions etc.



## **Divide and conquer**

Work with your partner to allow each other time to yourself. Take turns with the kids and let the other have some alone time. Or split the kids up and take them off to do different activities.



## **Anticipate conflict**

You are going to argue. It is inevitable. But before it happens, sit down together and think how you might manage it. Use a phrase or code word to indicate your need for space or that conflict is brewing. Agree together on strategies to manage conflict before it happens



# Maintaining relationships



**Family challenge**

What do you all anticipate as challenges?

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**Family plan for challenges**

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**Boundaries**

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**Divide and conquer agreement**

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**Conflict resolution**

Warning phrase:

Strategies to manage arguments:

# Keeping the kids happy



## **Routine**

Children thrive on routine, so as much as possible establish a good routine in the house, even if self isolating.



## **Talk to them**

All of the changes will be affecting your children, even if they seem OK. Children are like sponges who absorb everything. You might think you are protecting them by not telling them what's happening; but in actual fact, they will just fill in the blanks with their imagination which might be worse! Also, see this time as an opportunity to connect with them in a way you can't when at work!



## **Occupy them**

Let the kids identify a list of activities that they want to do. This gives them a sense of control, but also means they are more likely to stay engaged in the activity. I can't recommend the Five Minute Mum book or Instagram account more for keeping the kids entertained.



## **Screen time**

Don't fret too much about screen time. Instead, just schedule it and break it up a little with other activities they have chosen to do.



## **Get them involved**

- Let them help you tidy, declutter, redecorate, sort out toys etc
- Ask them what they think could be done around the house to make things better
- Ask them how they would like to use their time, and don't forget to check in with them to see how they are doing

# Keeping the kids happy



## Routine

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- .
- .
- .



## Talk to them

Topics to discuss:

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- .
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## Occupy them

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- .
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## Screen time schedule

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## Tasks to do together

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Education Support  
40A Drayton Park  
London N5 1EW  
+44 (0) 20 7697 2750

[educationsupport.org.uk](https://educationsupport.org.uk)

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