

Coping with coronavirus strategies for inpatients

You have received this leaflet because you have been diagnosed with coronavirus and have been admitted to hospital to ensure you are receiving the best medical care for your individual needs. At this time you may feel a variety of emotions, including but not limited to anxiety and fear about your recovery process and the impact your health issues may have on your loved ones. These emotions and many more are completely normal and understandable in the context of a situation that is very abnormal. It is not possible to predict the course of your condition but your medical team will be working very hard to ensure you receive the best care possible. The hospital is well prepared for treating patients with coronavirus and are happy to answer any questions or listen to any concerns you may have.

Things that can help

- If possible, display personal belongings around you.
- Make use of activities to occupy your time. Things like books, magazines, television, podcasts, games or the radio.
- Stay connected to loved ones using phones or video calling.
- Talk to loved ones about everyday things and also how you are feeling.
- Engage in conversation with the medical staff supporting you, stay informed and ask any questions that you might have.
- If possible, look out of your window to help you feel connected to the outside world. If this is not possible google pictures or videos of nature which you find peaceful or calming.

Common responses to stressful situations

When we are faced with a stressful situation, such as when we are unwell and in hospital, this can have an effect on how we think, how we feel, and our behaviour– all of which are completely normal.

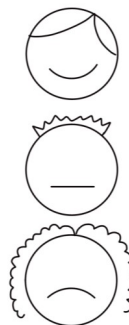
Thoughts

- Predicting the future and imagining you know what will happen
- Catastrophising by imagining worst case scenarios about your own health, your loved ones, or what might happen in the future
- Self-criticism and self-blame. Saying 'This is my fault'.



Feelings

- Worry, anxiety and fear about your health and/or the health of your loved ones
- Helplessness and feeling vulnerable
- Anger or frustration about your situation
- Guilt about exposure to the coronavirus and its effects on you and your loved ones
- Shame or stigma about being diagnosed with coronavirus.



Behaviours

- Spending lots of time worrying
- Restlessness, for example difficulty relaxing or sleeping
- Crying or feeling tearful
- Wanting to be alone or withdrawing from your loved ones
- Being more irritable or snappy.



Things that can help

Grounding exercise

1

When you get caught up in thoughts about the past or the future that cause you distress it may be helpful to do a grounding exercise to connect you to the present moment. This can easily be done by focusing on five things you can **see**, four things you can **hear**, three things you can **touch**, and finally two things you can **smell**.

Imagery exercise

2

- Get comfortable, close your eyes, take a slow deep breath.
- Now imagine bringing to mind a place where you can feel calm, safe and relaxed. This may be somewhere you have been before or somewhere you would like to go.
- Spend some time in this place and engage all your senses. What can you see, hear, feel, taste and smell?
- Take time to enjoy being there and return to it as often as you need.

Daily mindfulness

3

Mindfulness is an evidence-based skill that has been shown to have a positive impact on mental and physical wellbeing. You can find more information on mindfulness at:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/

Like any new skill it takes practice. See if you can listen to one guided 'Mindfulness of Breath' exercise a day. See the link below:
<https://www.cntw.nhs.uk/resource-library/relaxation-techniques/>

Self-care

4

Caring for ourselves and our wellbeing is important. Try and be kind, compassionate and patient with yourself as your body heals. It can help to ask yourself "What would I say to a loved one in this situation?"

Seeking further support

University Hospitals Bristol have a variety of mental health support services available to patients. If you feel you might benefit from emotional support, speak to your medical team about support that is available.

Further information about coronavirus and specific health conditions can be searched for via national health websites, such as:

British Heart Foundation: www.bhf.org.uk/

Somerville Foundation for Congenital Heart Disease:

<https://thesf.org.uk/>

National Kidney Federation: www.kidney.org.uk/

Cancer Research UK: www.cancerresearchuk.org/

British Lung Foundation: <https://www.blf.org.uk/>

UK Government Website: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

NHS Website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/