

MANAGING HEIGHTENED STRESS FROM COVID-19



At The Diana Award, we understand how stressful, uncertain and upsetting life has been for many of us since the global coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. For all of us, life seemed to change overnight and we could no longer see our friends and loved ones, were told it was no longer safe to go to work or school and were concerned about our health. On top of that, we could not leave the house except for essentials, meaning our physical environment became significantly smaller. As a result of these changes, many of us became understandably anxious about our mental health and wellbeing.

For many young people, these feelings remain so we've put together this helpful guide on how to deal with heightened stress and anxiety which we hope will help you to make things a little easier.

TIP #1

Take time out to do something peaceful that you enjoy, for example, practice yoga or mindfulness, meditate, exercise, play or listen to music, cook or bake, try a spot of gardening or a sport or game you love. Some type of physical break will bring you out of your own mind and will release some much-needed endorphins; (these are the natural feel good chemicals in your body!)

TIP #2

It sounds simple but **take deep breaths and count to 10 slowly!** Inhale slowly and hold your breath for 3 seconds before exhaling for as long as you can. Do this up to 10 and then repeat if necessary. Breathing is one of those things we do naturally without realising but taking a few moments to feel our own breath can act as a reset and can calm a busy mind.

TIP #3

Establish a healthy routine. This means eating a healthy, balanced diet, getting enough sleep and exercising regularly. It sounds simple and might be obvious to some but anxiety can make us neglect ourselves and the natural remedies that a good routine can bring. Include those fruit and veggies, sweat out those home workouts and don't stare at a screen until 4am!

TIP #4

Learn how to accept the things in life we cannot control. This is a lot easier said than done but, especially with lockdown and a global pandemic, it's crucial to realise that worrying and stressing about things we can never control will never help us; in fact, it will hold us back. Try to maintain a positive outlook and take ownership of the things you can control in life while letting go of those we cannot.

TIP #5

Talk to someone. Make sure you're speaking to your friends and family. When you feel this way, it's so important we don't bottle it up and talking through what's making you feel anxious or stressed might help you understand the root cause. Once we've found the reason, we can take steps to put things in place to feel better. Plus, you might be surprised at others who feel the same way and who really appreciate having someone to talk to and to listen.

Remember, the world may have changed as a result of the pandemic but you still have people around you who are there to support you. So don't bottle things up – speak with a trusted adult about how you're feeling because a problem shared is a problem halved and you're sure to feel better once you have someone listening to how you're feeling. Check out our 'Support Network' activity on our Resource Centre for more on this.

Further Support_

The Diana Award Crisis Messenger provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK. If you are a young person in crisis, you can text **DA** to **85258**. Trained volunteers will listen to how you're feeling and help you think the next step towards feeling better.

We're proud to be the only charity set up in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, and her belief that young people have the power to change the world. It's a big mission but there are two things within it that we focus our charity's efforts on – young people and change.

Throughout all of our programmes and initiatives, 'change' for and by young people is central, including our anti-bullying work which encourages change in attitudes and behaviours.

We hope you found this resource useful and wish you all the best in your anti-bullying journey. If you would like to help us create more resources and train even more Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you can make a £5 donation by texting CHANGE 5 to 70470 or visit diana-award.org.uk/donate

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