

Coronavirus – COVID-19

The Highland Council Psychological Service have been asked by some schools for information on how parents/carers and pupils can be supported to maintain wellbeing and positive mental health in the light of COVID-19. Here is the information collated, so far, and hopefully it will provide some useful information, at least as a starting point.

Parents and schools can continue to access information, on this rapidly changing situation, from Government and NHS sources such as the [NHS Inform website](#) and the [Health Protection Scotland website](#). Also looking at this [Highland Council website](#) for more local information may be helpful. However, it may be best to only check for information once or twice a day, as it can be easy to become overwhelmed. Adults should try, as much as possible, to model being calm as children and young people will be looking to adults to measure their own response. The calmer adults can be, the more this will help children and young people cope and remain resilient.

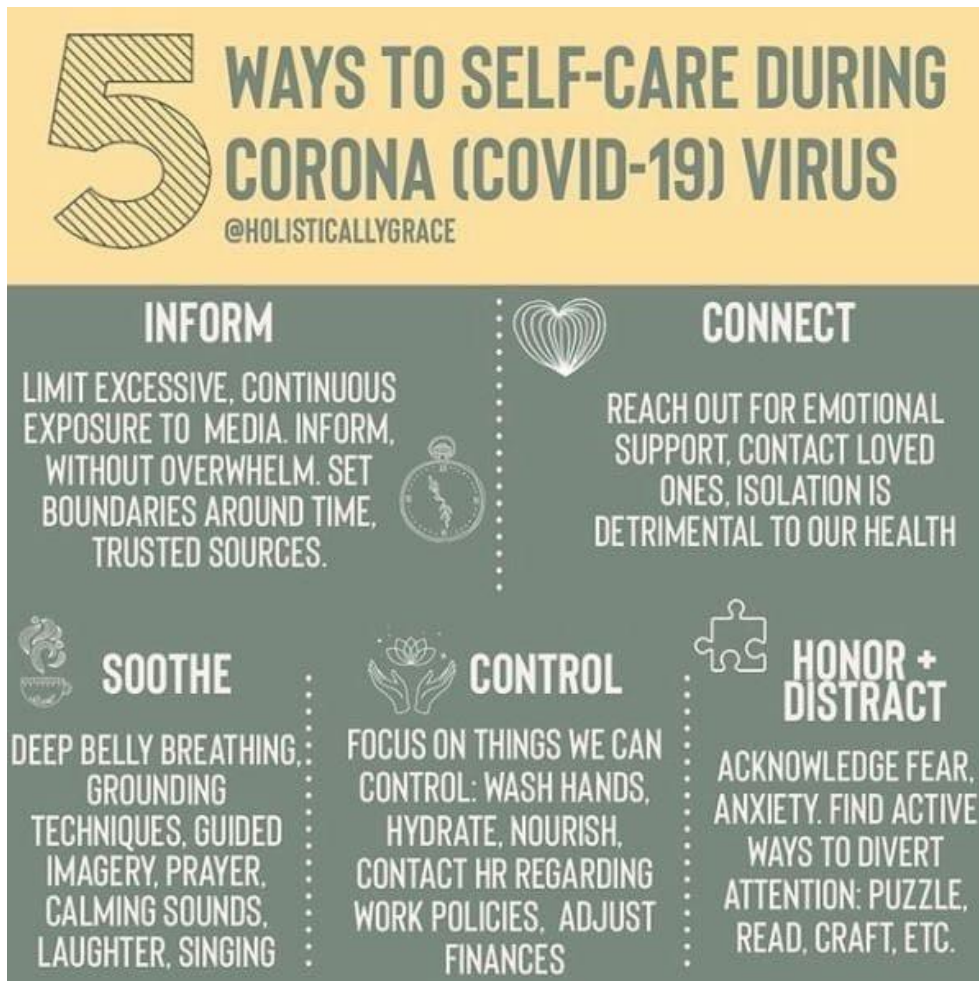
Schools and parents/carers should try to keep home routines as consistent as possible, as this will help provide a sense of normality and safety. Keeping in touch with friends and family (especially any vulnerable members of the community) through technology and the telephone may help to reduce feelings of loneliness and worry. [This document](#) (from an Educational Psychologist in Hong Kong) gives some tips on how to maintain a sense of routine, and this [image](#) (from ASPEP the Association of Scottish Principal Educational Psychologists) provides advice on how families can maintain routines should schools close (it is useful advice even without the schools being shut). Similar advice for parents/carers can be found [here](#), from the National Association of School Psychologists, although the site is American it is still provides relevant information. The [Mental Health Europe](#) website and the [PBS news site](#), both advise parents/carers to look after their own mental health, as then they will be better able to meet the needs of their children. A site with good tips for positive mental health is the [Every Mind Matters site](#).

The British Psychological Society have information about talking to children about Covid-19 [here](#), as do [Unicef](#). The [Child Mind website](#) gives advice on how to speak to children, taking into account their age, regarding traumatic events and the advice could be useful for scaffolding conversations regarding COVID-19. [Here is a link to another site](#) which also gives strategies for different age ranges of children and young people who may be experiencing fear and anxiety.

A [Social Story written by Carol Gray](#) with photographs, and another Social Story from Twinkl [here](#), may help younger children and visual learners gain a clearer understanding of COVID-19. The [Young Scot website](#) has some information which teenagers may like to read and access themselves. [Newsround](#) has information for children and young people to access regarding coronavirus too.

For any individual that is experiencing anxiety relating to COVID-19, [this website](#) may help, and this [list of apps](#) may be useful too. The [Action for Happiness](#) website has useful information as to how to respond and cope with COVID-19.

A useful infographic relating to self-care during COVID-19 can be seen below.



The infographic offers similar advice to the five ways to wellbeing which are:

- **Connect** – spend time with family and friends, do things you enjoy and spend time together (technology may have to be used instead of face-to-face contact, for some friends and family considering COVID-19).
- **Be active** – staying active keeps you feeling healthy – both physically and mentally. Go for a walk or a run and get some fresh air (unless you need to self-isolate) and maintain social distancing (e.g. remain a distance away from other members of the public). If you do have to remain within your home, consider doing a workout from YouTube.
- **Take notice** – stop and think about how you are feeling. This is known as mindfulness and there is more information [here](#).
- **Keep learning** – this can act as a good distraction from worries about worldwide events and can also build self-esteem and confidence. Are there any skills either as an adult you want to learn, or that your child wants to learn (e.g. riding a bike, learning a language, baking a cake).
- **Give** – giving to others can help us feel connected, provide us with a sense of purpose and can be rewarding. However, at this time, we may have to be creative in how we can give and do this in a remote way – such as phoning, writing letters, or doing people’s shopping for them.

More information on the five ways to wellbeing can be found on this [NHS website](#).