

Keeping Positive: COVID-19 (coronavirus)

This information is to help you if you're being admitted to hospital for testing or treatment of COVID-19 (coronavirus) and:

- You're feeling anxious or worried
- You're feeling isolated or alone
- You're experiencing distressing thoughts

It's very normal to feel scared about something like this. Please be assured that you are in the best place and the staff in the hospital will do everything they can to help you feel comfortable and relaxed.

If you have questions about your treatment plan, please ask your nurses and doctors. More general information about COVID-19 can be found online at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19

What can help me let go of these feelings?

Acknowledge that you feel this way. Don't ignore these feelings.

- It can help to express this anxiety in a way you can control. Perhaps writing down what you feel, or keeping a journal. Once you've written it down, let it go. See the last page of this leaflet for a guide.
- Focus on the present: listen to a radio programme or podcast. Music can relax you, connect you to your emotions and distract you from worrying thoughts. **Really listen to the music. Can you pick out different instruments? Can you hear a drum beat or a certain rhythm? Focus on the music, and let other thoughts fade away.**
- Keep your mind engaged: puzzles and colouring are a great way to keep your mind engaged and distract yourself from what's going on around you. There are lots of free online sites. See our list of recommended links on the other side of this leaflet.
- Your imagination can transport you to somewhere calm; even if you can't physically get away, choose a memory of somewhere you've been, or a place you have imagined. Close your eyes, and think about the details of this place. **What does it look like; what colours and shapes can you see? Can you hear any sounds? Is it warm or cool? Let your mind drift and your body relax.** If you have access to the internet, the website Geoguessr can help you imagine being elsewhere.
- Worry can cause tension in your muscles and mind. Try to relax using a 'body scan':
 1. Close your eyes.
 2. Start by clenching your toes as much as you can for a few seconds then releasing them. Notice the difference between the two feelings.
 3. Move up your body to your thighs, your stomach and all the way to your shoulders and hands, clenching and relaxing each muscle in turn.
 4. Take time to notice any parts of your body that feel tense, tight or tired.
 5. Repeat if you still feel tense. Take a moment to relax, then slowly and gently begin to move.

Things that will work for me to engage my mind and distract myself from worry:

Notice what you are thinking and feeling: e.g. I'm feeling scared... my mind is saying... my body feels...

Pause and reflect - Is this fact or opinion? What's the bigger picture? What advice would you give someone else in your situation?

Let go. These thoughts and feelings will pass. You don't have to respond to them. You might imagine them floating away in a bubble. Shift your focus or attention to something else, perhaps using this guide.

Are there any apps or websites that may help me to relax?

If you have access to an internet-enabled device, like a smart phone or a tablet, you can try looking up some of these sites, or downloading the apps on your device:

Calm / Headspace: apps for guided meditation and mindfulness

Chill Panda: an app that measures your heart rate and suggests tasks to suit your state of mind.

www.mind.org.uk: information and advice about anxiety

www.oxfordmindfulness.org: free online mindfulness with Oxford University

www.jigsawplanet.com: online jigsaw puzzles from 20 to 200 pieces

www.geoguesser.com: a round-the-world geography game

Who can I talk to?

Calling or video-calling a friend or family member may help to distract you and give you some comfort.

If you are finding things very hard and the tips in this leaflet don't help, it is okay to ask for help from a member of staff. Please let them know how you are feeling.

If you would like, they can call a member of the hospital chaplaincy team to come and talk with you. Even if you have no particular or strong religious faith or belief, someone from the chaplaincy team can talk with you about what you are going through, what gives you comfort and what is important to you.

The ward team may also refer you to our Mental Health Liaison Service who offer specialist support.

Disclaimer

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

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