

# 5 ways to wellbeing while in isolation

A personal guide to Five ways to wellbeing

Adapted from 'Taking Steps Towards Living Well'



*Supporting you to live well*



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# Introduction

Many of us are struggling with feeling low or stressed during isolation, so we have adapted our **5 Ways to Wellbeing** to support your mental wellbeing during this difficult time.

We hope it will help you to look for moments of joy in every day; to connect more with the outside world and to give you some ideas to focus on during this strange time.

Adapted from 'Taking Steps Towards Living Well' with Marie Ash, Peer Support Worker

# So – what are the five ways?

## 1. Connect...

Try connecting with family or friends over the phone, through letters or via video calls. Connect with music. When you play it, think about how it makes you feel - can you feel the beat of the music? Connect with your pet if you have one. What does their fur feel like to touch? Talk to them, how do they react and how do you feel? Enjoy the moment.

## 2. keep Learning...

Try one of the Devon Recovery Learning Community online courses. Learn to cook a new recipe or try a new bake. Learn a new art, language or craft.

## 3. be Active...

If you can go out for your daily exercise, go for a walk, cycle or run and explore the places you can get to from your house. Look online for workouts and classes – try 'The Body Coach' for free, daily PE classes. Dance while dusting! Put some music on and get moving whilst you get your housework done.

## 4. take Notice...

If you are allowed to go out for one hours' exercise, take notice of what you see, what you can hear and what you can smell. In your home look at a plant or flower you may have, look at the detail in the leaves or in the flower. Notice when you eat. What does it smell like? What is the texture? Enjoy each individual element of your meals.

## 5. Give...

If you are enjoying your one daily exercise and abiding by social distancing, smile and say hello to passers-by to share some joy. If you use social media, share an uplifting and positive quote or a picture of nature from your daily exercise. Keeping a gratitude diary is a way to give thanks for what you have.

## Connect...

- Try connecting with family or friends over the phone, through letters or via video calls.
- Connect with music. When you play it, think about how it makes you feel - can you feel the beat of the music?
- Connect with your pet if you have one. What does their fur feel like to touch? Talk to them, how do they react and how do you feel? Enjoy the moment.



# 1. Connect

Social distancing can make it feel hard to connect to the outside world and loved ones. Here are a few things that can help:

### Talking

Talking can help us to feel connected with our loved ones. Give your friends, family or neighbours a message, call, or try video calling them to really feel close to them. As well as checking in and seeing how they are, you will also increase your own wellbeing through sharing thoughts and feelings. It might be an opportunity to reconnect with family or friends you have not seen for some time. You could share positive tips and things you are finding helpful during isolation or ask them for their ideas.

### Social media

Social media can be helpful but be mindful of not using it too much and try to ensure that the content you are viewing is positive. How about creating a family or social group chat in which you can keep up-to-date with one another. If you're feeling overwhelmed, try to keep the chat as a positive and light-hearted place where you are able to support each other.

There are many support groups available online if you or the person you are talking to need extra, more dedicated support and advice. Take a look at the Devon Partnership NHS Trust website: <https://www.dpt.nhs.uk/>

### Music

Play music you enjoy and connect with the way it makes you feel. Do you enjoy singing with it? Be curious, notice what happens to your body when it plays - do you want to dance, conduct or sing? Being mindful of neighbours, notice whether you like the music loud or soft and gentle. Can you feel the beat of the music?

### Connect with yourself

We often don't have the opportunity to really connect with ourselves. You could take the time to sit and really notice how your body feels: remember to be curious and try not to judge yourself. How does the surface you are sitting or standing on feel? Scan your body - you might want to thank it for the incredible way it works, which often goes unnoticed. Being kind to our bodies and mind helps to keep us well.

### Connect with pets or other animals

If you have pets or other animals around you, spend time with them. They may be acting differently as animals pick up on changes in our emotions. Sit and talk with them. Notice what their fur or skin feels like.

### Connect with your spirituality

If you have a faith this may be an opportunity to explore that more - whatever deity that may or may not be. There are religious services on TV or online while religious buildings are closed. Contact your local faith leader to see what support is available. If your spirituality means something different to you, it might be an opportunity to learn more about that and take a look at the resources and books available.

## Questions to aid reflection

1. How would you know if you were **CONNECTING** or just making contact?  
What makes the difference?

2. If being well **CONNECTED** is good for your mental wellbeing
  - Is there anything you'd like to do more of?
  - Is there anything you'd like to do less of?

3. Can you think of **CONNECTIONS** that you would like to make, or remake?

## keep Learning...

- Try one of the Devon Recovery Learning Community online courses
- Learn to cook a new recipe or try a new bake
- Learn a new art, language or craft



## 2. keep Learning

Learning might feel difficult for many different reasons: our previous learning experience may be negative, or we may not feel very enthusiastic about doing it.

If we remember to be kind to ourselves and mindful of the language we use, we can approach it in a curious way -thinking 'I wonder what I could learn?' instead of 'I must'. When thinking about learning, think 'is this something that interests me?' and 'will it give me a sense of satisfaction?' Remember, at times it might feel a bit daunting, but you have the ability to work through this and gain a lot from it.

### Skills

You could reconnect with a skill you have not used for a while, practice a craft or try to bake a cake. Remember: it does not have to be a large project and is not limited to academic study. Learning new cooking skills can be fun and this is a good time to find different ways to cook with your usual store cupboard items. If shopping seems like a barrier then there are different organisations offering help in our communities or message a friend, family member or neighbour to help.

### Courses

You may choose to use the time to access an online course. Take a look at the Devon Recovery Learning Community online for a list of courses they are still running. You could try to learn a language, read a new book or take up crafting.

### Positive planning

This time could be an opportunity to plan the places you would like to go when social isolation is lifted – you could use the time to make yourself a 'bucket list' of things you'd like to do in the future that you can look back on and tick off.

## Questions to aid reflection

1. What do I think about '**LEARNING**'? Would I like to learn something new each day?

2. What would I like to **LEARN** about? What interests me, what do I value, what would be useful?

3. What do I need to do to make **LEARNING** fun and something I look forward to?

## be Active...

- If you can go out for your daily exercise, go for a walk, cycle or run and explore the places you can get to from your house
- Look online for workouts and classes – try 'The Body Coach' for free, daily PE classes
- Dance while dusting! Put some music on and get moving whilst you get your housework done.



# 3. be Active

There are many different ways to be active even in isolation.

### Exercise

If you have a normal exercise routine, can you adapt that to your situation? If you can go out for a walk or cycle ride, use the time to get out in the fresh air. Try exploring different parts of your local neighbourhood and take notice of the things you see as you go. As you are walking, visualise breathing in positive refreshing air and breathe out the negative worries you are feeling.

Struggling to feel motivated to exercise alone? Have a look online for free classes and guidance. 'The Body Coach' posts free PE classes every day – you could even try to get your family involved! There are many other classes such as yoga and Pilates, circuits and 'Couch to 5K' running guides. Be mindful to work within your ability and enjoy what you are doing. See this as a positive opportunity to start or refresh an activity you have wanted to do but have not yet found the time.

If you are working from home and can go outdoors, short breaks throughout the day in the fresh air can really invigorate you and set you up for more productive time spent at your desk.

### Music and Dance

You can also be active with music and dance. Make a playlist of your favourite songs or switch to an upbeat radio station and dance as you do your housework! Routine, such as our daily chores, can really help us manage our wellbeing. Make them a positive experience if you can, play your favourite music and get moving!

## Questions to aid reflection

1. What activities do I engage in on a regular basis? How would I like to develop this?

2. Who can support me to be more **active** at home? What can we do together?

3. Are there any minor adjustments I can make in my life that can help me be more **ACTIVE**? (Remember, 'small changes can make a big difference')

## take Notice...

- If you are allowed to go out for one hours' exercise, take notice of what you see, what you can hear and what you can smell
- In your home look at a plant or flower you may have, look at the detail in the leaves or in the flower
- Notice when you eat. What does it smell like? What is the texture? Enjoy each individual element of your meals.



# 4. take Notice

There is much to notice around us, even while in isolation - this is an opportunity to really take notice of our environment

It might be the way the sun shines through a window and how it changes the feel of the room – try to look at things in appreciation and gratitude.

### In nature

If out on your daily activity, take the time to notice what is around you. Be mindful in the moment. You might want to really notice the different plants you see, and the wildlife around you; the birds, insects, animals. Notice the rainbows you see in people's windows as you go by. Use this time as an opportunity to see the many beautiful things around you. If you come across a stream or river notice how it moves and the sound it makes. Does the sun glistens on the water, what colour is it, is it running fast or slow can you see any life in it, how does it make you feel looking at it, what sensations can you feel in your body?

### At home

If you are remaining in your home, then use this time to explore your home environment. You can do this in any room, look round and see what you notice. How does a particular article make you feel, can you remember where you bought it? Be curious. If you have plants this is an opportunity to really look at them. Taking notice might mean that you sit in silence and reflect on your day, what you have seen and how you feel.

Taking notice can be brought into our hand hygiene, which is of course very important at the moment. Notice how the soap feels, what the water feels like on your hands, what the bubbles feel like. Is there a colour? Is there a scent? What is that like? How does it make you feel?

We can also take notice when we eat! Is it a favourite food, what does it look like, what can you smell, does it remind you of anything and how does that make you feel? Is it a snack or a main meal? It doesn't matter what you are eating, we can all take notice by savouring our food and using our senses to explore every aspect.

## Questions to aid reflection

1. If noticing enhances wellbeing, what opportunities can I take or make to **TAKE NOTICE** more often?

2. How can I practice slowing down and pausing more often?

3. What difference will incorporating this in my day to day life make?

## Give...

- If you are enjoying your one daily exercise and abiding by social distancing, smile and say hello to passers-by to share some joy
- If you use social media, share an uplifting and positive quote or a picture of nature from your daily exercise
- Keeping a gratitude diary is a way to give thanks for what you have.



# 5. Give

### Spread cheer

We know that giving is good for our wellbeing and we can still give, even if in social isolation. If you can take your exercise while sticking to social distancing rules, make an effort to smile and share conversation with those you pass. We can still talk to people while shopping and show gratitude for those working to help us. If you are able to, you could give by offering to collect shopping for others, especially the elderly or vulnerable. This could be a good time to send a card to loved one to brighten their day.

### Gratitude

Gratitude is another aspect of giving that is good for our wellbeing. You can feel gratitude for so many things: a friend's text to see how you are; an affirmation on social media you like; a relaxing bubble bath; seeing the beauty in nature; being able to play music you love. Keeping a gratitude diary can help. Writing your diary first thing in the morning or just before bed can give you a positive start or end to the day. Try to think of 3-5 things you're grateful for and note them down: seeing them on paper often helps you to remember these things during more difficult moments.

## Questions to aid reflection

1. What do you **GIVE** others on a regular basis? Do you notice what it's like for you when you **GIVE** to others?

2. What else could you **GIVE** others that you hadn't thought of before? What small gifts can you offer that you will feel good about?

3. What do you **GIVE** yourself? How can you be more generous and appreciative to yourself? What 'treats' would really improve your experience of life?

## Questions to aid reflection

1. How could using the 'Five ways' have a positive impact during isolation?

2. What measures can I put in place to prompt me to use the 'Five ways' consciously?

3. Is there anyone I'd like to ask to support me in this or share this with?



## Five ways to wellbeing

This Devon Partnership NHS Trust initiative is part of the national Foresight campaign to promote mental health and personal wellbeing

Designed by Sumographics Ltd: [info@sumographics.co.uk](mailto:info@sumographics.co.uk)

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