

Mental Health and Coronavirus¹

In the event that one of the people were pastoral caring for in the midst of the coronavirus outbreak is also struggling with mental health issue there are a number of things we can helpfully ask them. Additionally, do remind them of normal support structures (Home Groups etc.) and Samaritans (116123).

1. Diet and Hydration

Regular eating, steady blood sugar levels and proper hydration all have an impact on our mood and mental health. So ask:

- Are you eating regularly/properly?
- Are you drinking enough water?

2. Medication and Therapy

It's important that if some is on medication for their mental health that they continue to take their medication. It's possible to order repeat prescriptions by phone or online. If someone is in therapy it may be possible to have appointments over the phone or online So ask:

- Are you still taking your medication?
- Do you have enough? Do you know how to get more?
- Have you spoken to your therapist/counsellor about distance appointments?

3. Routine

Maintaining a regular routine can be really helpful for people who struggle with their mental health. Although coronavirus will disrupt normal routine people can still plan and follow a regular routine. So ask:

- Have you thought about how you're going to spend your days?
- Have you planned activities, hobbies, or habits you want to start?
- Have you thought about books you'd like to read or TV shows you'd like to watch?

4. Physical Activity

Exercise is an important and beneficial tool in helping people who struggle with their mental health. Therefore it would be good to encourage people to find appropriate ways to remain active despite social distancing policies. So ask:

- Are you staying active?
- Have you thought about doing things like cleaning the house, doing an online exercise programme, or going for a walk on the forest?

5. Connect with Others

It's important to encourage people to try and connect with other people, albeit it physical contact. So ask:

- Have you made plans to call or skype anyone this week?
- If you're worried about loneliness have you thought about listening to talk radio or podcasts?

7. Read a Psalm with them

It's important to offer people perspective and point them in the direct of the God who loves and cares for them, and to the King who died for them. So consider talking to them about the God who sees their tears (Psalm 56:8 ^{ESV}); the God who keeps his people and who neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:4); and the God who hears our cry when we're exhausted from groaning (Psalm 6).

¹ Questions adapted from the MIND website: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>