

The 5 ways to wellbeing - Connect

An introduction to wellbeing and how we can use the five ways to wellbeing during the Covid-19 crisis

Connect



The first of the five ways to wellbeing is connect. Very simply, this means to connect with other people, family, friends, neighbours and colleagues and to take it further, to build strong relationships with those that are important to us. A pandemic such as this will really focus your mind on the people you care about; we are all worried about those that matter to us and this is a great time to let people know that we care.

One of the things which makes it hard to connect with people in usual circumstances is a lack of time; we are all so busy rushing from home to work and juggling childcare, jobs and our homelife that often there is not enough time to sit and catch up with a good friend. What we have now is lots of time, use it to connect with the people we want to be close to. This will improve your wellbeing and make you and others happier.



Let's start with the people we are at home with; probably our immediate family. Connecting with our families sounds like it should be easy - enforced time together is never easy!

We all know it's not going to be smooth sailing to spend weeks on end at home with our families; we will all get frustrated and we will all need to take time out. It is really sensible to let everyone in the house know that it is ok to say: "I need some time out". In order to maintain good relationships, it is important to establish some boundaries.

When we are spending time together here are some suggestions for things you could try:

Have a board game night - choose a night, turn off the tv and tablets and play a game (maybe avoid monopoly if you know it causes arguments!).



Have a family movie night - choose a film and review it afterwards. Create a family time capsule - show what life was like for your family at this time and bury it in the garden to be found in years to come.



You Choose” evening - if you have people of different ages in your family with different interests, try having a “You Choose” evening where one night a week, one member of the family chooses an activity for everyone to do, the whole family takes part in the activity and someone else gets to choose the next one.



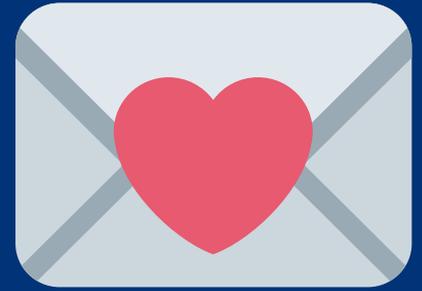
Create a time capsule - Create a time capsule with your family of what life was like before and during Covid-19. Bury it in your garden so it can be found many years from now as a message to the future and a little piece of history.



Date night - if you are at home with your partner, try and have a date night, make an effort to spend some special time together that’s just about the two of you.



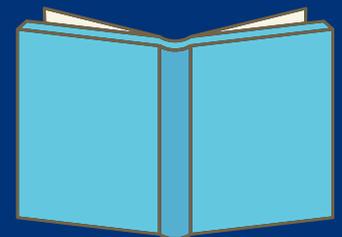
Write letters and cards - Perhaps you have family members or friends who are alone at this time, write letters and cards, get the children to make pictures to send to older family members, its lovely to difference receive something bright and cheerful in the post and it could make the world of difference to someone's day if they have been in isolation for a while.



Social media - If you live alone it can be really scary to be alone all the time, we often rely on our work for our interactions with people and a lot of our free time is spent socialising, you are probably missing the gym and nights out with friends. Whilst we aren't able to visit family and friends, social media can play an important part in our efforts to connect with others. You could start a group chat with friends or family members.



Book club - Start a book club with your good friends, give yourselves time to read and then have a group video call to talk about what you thought of the book.



Have a cook along - Try a cook along evening with a friend, choose a new recipe and video call each other, both cook the same meal at the same timer. If you have friends that you usually see over the weekend, schedule in time to call each other to chat and catch up.



Connecting with neighbours - Connecting with neighbours is sometimes hard to do too, it is unusual nowadays to live where we grew up, and strong community relationships are something that take time and effort to establish.

We are encouraged not to leave our homes at the moment but there are people living around us who have been told to stay at home for the next 12 weeks, others are isolating because someone in their household is sick.

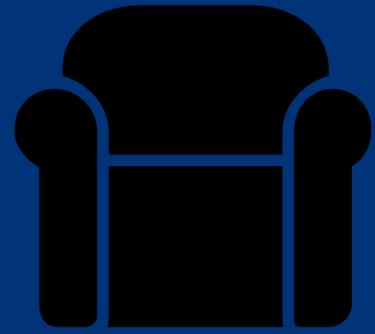
How can we connect with them? We can drop a note through the door and let our neighbours know that they can contact us via phone or email if they need help, there are lots of community groups being set up on facebook and other social media platforms to help provide local support at this time and people are volunteering to collect prescriptions for elderly neighbours or pick up essentials for them when they do their own shopping trip. This is a great way to connect with people in our community and there is potential here to build a legacy of community support and relationships that continue long after the Covid-19 pandemic is over.



Connect with colleagues - Connect with colleagues regularly on team chats, individually or in video calls, It is good to talk to colleagues about how we are coping with the new home working set up and you will be able to share tips about how to be proactive and how to manage the work life juggle at home. You might have colleagues who struggle when they are alone too much and if you have a particular friend at work who you are aware will be finding this hard, reach out to them and perhaps suggest a daily video coffee break.



Self care - Make sure you are taking care of yourself, especially if you have lots of family members who are alone and who you need to check in with, try and split those calls over the course of the day, and if you feel that it's getting too much and you need some time out then let people know that you are taking some personal time and that you will be in touch tomorrow.



Its very easy to be overwhelmed at the current time and it is important, if you want to establish healthy and connected relationships, that you look after yourself and are mindful of your own needs.



This week, have a think about the people you want to connect with and try and think of one way you can do that. Try and do something fun with the people you live with and if you live alone connect with friends. Find out if there is a local community group supporting people through the Covid-19 pandemic and offer to help if you can.

Next Week – Be Active

