



Covid-19: 16 Tips on Working Remotely & Caring for Your Mental

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In this time of global crisis and huge disruption keeping calm and carrying on is testing our limits. The Covid-19 / Corona Virus has exposed our human vulnerability and ability to cope with an invisible threat. It's natural that our survival instinct and fight or flight response kicks in and our strong responses of fear, anxiety and uncertainty rush to the surface. Our reactions to fear and anxiety can work for us or against us and others. How we chose to deal with this makes the difference between being ruled and dragged down or tempering this, in order to get through and become more resilient

Sink or Swim

With the spread of the virus this is not just affecting our social structures, businesses, working practices and physical health, it is affecting our mental health, as well. We are becoming more anxious, afraid and uncertain about the future. People are becoming suspicious and mistrusting. We are seeing fear and

panic behaviour with people stock piling food and false blame regarding the cause and spread. The economy is suffering and when this happens, it hits businesses and employment hard, reaching into our pockets. Our freedom of movement is being limited and this wakes us up to the reality, that something, which for most of us is essential and take for granted is now severely restricted. Understandably this makes us extremely insecure. We can easily succumb to fear and panic, which tends to hinder rather than help or we can react constructively. Of course, we may know this logically, however this is more easily said than done

Keeping Our Heads in a Crisis

Naturally we have to recognise the dangers and to acknowledge our fear and anxieties. However, in getting us through safely, there is a need to take any necessary precautions, as well as keep a tight rein on our reactions. This means constructively handling our stress and not allowing our fears and irrational reactions to get out of hand

So, in coming out on top of a crisis how can we best take care of mental health and well-being?

Eight Ways to Take Care of Your Mental Well-Being

1. **Take Control:** Rather than falling prey to an urge to lay blame our time and energy are better spent working to constructively understand and deal with the situation. Being pro-active rather than reactive bolsters our mental resilience, enabling us to create beneficial ways to move forward
2. **Limit Exposure:** Avoid continually consuming news or talking endlessly about the situation. Mass media and rumours tend to spread false and sensational information, which only serves to present an inflated perception of the situation. This fuels unsettling emotions and gives way to an overall sense of doom. Instead focus on the reality of the situation by gaining relevant details from reputable and trustworthy sources
3. **Gain Support:** Talk and connect with people and professionals, who can support you to deal positively with your concerns. Sharing what is going on in your head can be a great relief. This enables you to gain understanding, guidance and greater perspective assisting you to cope better

4. **Build Perspective:** Maintain focus on the bigger and longer-term picture - Recognise that crises pass and that there are many other important things, which are going on in your life. Taking time to acknowledge, reflect on and appreciate the different aspects of your life not only grounds you it also fosters a sense of deep meaning and positivity
5. **Build Social Relationships.** Check in regularly on loved ones, neighbours and those close to you. This can foster a strong sense of community, connectedness and support, which can ease anxiety and fears
6. **Take Care of Your Mental Well-Being,** as well as those around you through monitoring changes in mood, stress and mental health status. Be aware of when you are pushing yourself past your limits and take regular breaks and time off
7. **Engage in Activities, which Reduce Anxiety and Fear:** For example: relaxation exercises, sport and physical exercise, listening to music, reading, playing games, hobbies, getting enough sleep, good diet and nutrition, watching movies and connecting with family and friends can all help to reduce stress and keep you calm

8. **Reduce Risk**: Most importantly, if you are at risk follow any medical and official self-care and safety advice

From Adversity to Advantage

The outbreak of the Covid-19 / Corona Virus has led to masses of people having to work or stay at home, as well as limit their travel and contact with others. This can be extremely tough, especially when this is not by choice. For some people this can be feel like being under siege

Working from Home Heaven or Hell?

Working from home is heaven for me. I always hated having to work in open offices, depend on public transport or to drive in the city. I relish the quiet and lack of interruptions, the flexibility of how I organise and invest my time, being able to shop, go to appointments or out to places when most people are at work, being able to eat home cooked meals, not having to brave bad weather, miss deliveries or home repair visits

Although pure joy for me, for many others, working from home or remotely, this maybe their idea of hell or somewhere in between. The shift to unfamiliar circumstances and new expectations, along with strong feelings of fear, anxiety and uncertainty, can be extremely tough for many people. What matters most, in coping with these challenges and getting through any crisis, as safely as possible, is how we perceive and manage the situation

Eight Tips on Working Remotely or from Home

One of the biggest challenges in working remotely or from home is how to sustain good health and perform at your best, in order to maximise productivity. Here are some tips to keep you on track

1. **Focus on the Ups Not the Downs:** Positively approaching your situation as a chance to engage and achieve something can be useful. Adopting a mindset of opportunity rather than loss encourages you to develop new skills and perspectives

2. **Establish a Clear Structure:** This provides focus and enables you to stay ahead of the game. Constructively manage your time, stick to regular times of going to sleep, waking up, eating meals, taking breaks. Connect and communicate regularly with managers and work colleagues. Plan appointments with people throughout the day / week, especially to check in and see what may be needed
3. **Stay Away from Traps:** Avoid falling into unhelpful habits such as staying in your night clothes, watching excessive amounts of TV or finding reasons not to get on with work. Having or setting up a designated work room or space, can help to prepare you physically and mentally to focus and get on with the business at hand
4. **Don't Get Side Tracked:** Avoiding distractions is probably one of the hardest things to achieve. Mastering discipline for ourselves and others is key. Set clear boundaries, such as times you can be interrupted, breaks, going out or eating. Screen calls and avoid unnecessary or long conversations. Consider establishing a specific way to contact you when things are urgent

5. **Establish Goals:** Setting goals for work tasks and rewarding yourself for fulfilling provide direction and helps with motivation. There is no need to beat yourself up if you do not attain all or some of your goals. Simply reassess and adjust accordingly. Even if all tasks are not achieved a sense of achievement and moving forward are important
6. **Be Creative and Adaptable:** Coping with boredom or working alone can be a major obstacle for many people. Make the most of any opportunity to develop and learn from the situation, as well as to catch up, start, or sort things out. Connect and share with friends, family colleagues or on media and platforms, in ways, which feed your interests and support you. These can create useful strategies and build mental resilience
7. **Take Charge of Your Mental Well-Being:** Watch out for things such as; loss of motivation, feeling emotionally low, tearful, anxious, frustrated, irritated or angry, these could be signs of poor mental health or depression. It is also important to be aware of unhealthy coping strategies, such as sleeping, drinking alcohol or eating much more than usual or during the day. If

necessary, seek support earlier rather than later, from your employer, colleagues, family, friends or mental health professionals

8. **Stay Active and hydrated:** Try to move around as much as possible, drink water or fluids and engage in or find alternatives to hobbies and leisure activities. This can help boost your mood and prevent you from becoming tired or lethargic

**Extra Tip: Pamper yourself you deserve it - Afterall you need to keep your spirits up*



Caroline Ribeiro-Nelson is Head of Free Choices: Diverse Mental Health & Well-being. She is a trained psychotherapist and an experienced mental health consultant, coach & trainer

www.freechoices.co.uk