Covid-19 and CiC Support

At CiC we have been closely monitoring the new strain of coronavirus; Covid-19. Covid-19 is a new respiratory disease that affects your lungs and airways; it is caused by the virus Coronavirus.

Those exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19 have been advised by the NHS to stay at home and self-isolate. The most common symptoms of Covid-19 as outlined by the World Health Organisation are fever, dry cough and tiredness. Those over 70, with a long-term condition or pregnant women should take extra precautions.

How to Prevent the Virus from Spreading:

The following suggestions have been made by the NHS – at the time of writing – to slower the spread of Covid-19;

- Wash your hands with soap and water often – for at least 20 seconds
- Wash your hands the moment you get into work or home
- Use hand sanitiser if soap and water is not available
- When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or cough into your elbow
- Used tissues should be discarded into a closed-lid bin and wash your hands
- Avoid close contact with people exhibiting symptoms of coronavirus

- Limit public transport use to essential travel only
- Work from home if you are able
- Avoid social activities, such as visiting pubs, restaurants, theatres and cinemas
- Avoid events with large groups of people
- Use phone, online services, or apps to contact your GP surgery or other NHS services

Get in touch with CiC using the details below:
Phone: 0800 085 1376 or +44 (0)20 7938 0963
Email: assist@cic-eap.co.uk
Text relay: 1800 0800 085 1376
Web: www.cic-eap.co.uk
Your Mental Health

We understand that infectious disease outbreaks such as this one can cause widespread panic, fear and anxiety, which can begin to take a toll on our mental health. This can also have particular impact on those already living with conditions such as OCD or panic disorder. During difficult times such as those, we are facing globally, it is important to take the correct measures to protect your mental health.

We have put together the below tips to limit the effects of Covid-19 on our mental health;

- **Avoid untrustworthy news sources.** Unfortunately, during crises like this, it is very easy for inaccurate news to spread. Be this by news outlets, Facebook, Whatsapp or by word of mouth. These false stories can be very frightening and greatly add to the stress and anxiety many are already facing. To avoid unnecessary worry, use reputable sources to stay informed. We recommend to use the following to keep up to date on the virus; NHS, WHO, GOV. Those outside of the UK should make use of their local health and government websites for information.

- **Stay connected.** In times like these, it can be very easy for people to feel isolated from their community. Perhaps they are self-isolating, their city is on lockdown, or they are social distancing. Despite physical restrictions we may have to put in place, it is important to keep a community spirit and remain connected with your social group and loved ones. We recommend utilising platforms like Skype to stay connected. You could try the following changes to your usual activities; a dinner date over Skype, work meetings on a video call, play online games with your friends, join an online workout class. We are very fortunate that we have such a huge capacity for online connection – now is the time to utilise this.

- **Keep active.** With limitations on our activity, our physical activity is likely to decrease and this can have negative effects on our mental health. To avoid this try a home workout, go out for a walk, setup a standing desk, play a game of fetch with your dog, walk around your home every half hour, have active conference calls and be sure to schedule in time for some physical activity. We exercise frequently during a normal working day without realising it and it is important to try to retain this activity.

- **Stick to a daily routine.** Although we are in a very uncertain time, it is possible and important to try and stick to a routine. This should replicate your usual routine as much as possible. Wake up at the same time, have your usual breakfast, dress as usual, continue to chat with your colleagues, have your lunch at the same time, and finish work at the same time. By keeping to a routine, you are installing some structure and control. This feeling of control can be paramount in protecting our mental health during uncertainty.

Want to know more?

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Equip Yourself. Unfortunately, it is not possible or feasible to think that we could eliminate all distress caused by a pandemic. It is completely okay to feel stressed, anxious or uncertain. However, it is important that we are equipped with the tools to deal with these emotions when they come. Countless things can cause distress during a pandemic. It is important to learn what causes you particular distress and begin learning some coping mechanisms when faced with these. Limit your exposure to things which cause you distress, take up some CBT or Mindfulness classes, download a wellbeing app, focus on things that make you happy, talk with trusted people in your life, create a new exercise routine, keep a balanced diet and ensure a healthy sleep routine.

Reduce your exposure. Whilst the current Covid-19 pandemic is extremely important and we do need to be aware of the situation, we do not have to feel overwhelmed by it. Consider whom you follow on your social media accounts; is there too much talk about the virus for you? You can temporarily unfollow those people. You can mute keywords on Twitter and you will not see tweets that include these words. Is there too much news coverage on the TV? Try listening to the radio instead, or using on demand stream services where you choose what you watch. Be open to those you talk to regularly that you would like to avoid talking about the virus. Consider setting a strict time in which you check for an update on the virus from news sources you trust. In limiting your exposure to the stressor, we can hope to reduce the stress.

Be Kind. Be mindful not to attach Covid-19 to any ethnicity or nationality. Avoid referring to those who have tested positive for Covid-19 as ‘victims’, ‘cases’ or ‘diseased’. They are people who have, are being treated for or are recovering from Covid-19. Help those who are less able, offer to pick up some groceries for an elderly neighbour, check in on your pregnant colleague. It can greatly uplift our own spirits to help others.

How We Are Here To Help

Despite having closed our Central London office, we are on hand to help as always and will provide continued support through this difficult time.

Our AdviceLine

Our AdviceLine is still open 24/7 and you should see little to no effect on how our service runs.

All incoming calls will be diverted to our business continuity service provider, Connect Assist. They have robust procedures in place for disaster response. Should their own offices be locked down they have the capability to divert all incoming calls to their workforce operating from home. We are therefore able to assure you that our AdviceLine will remain open.

Each call made to Connect Assist will be fed back to CiC’s team who are working remotely. A member of our team will call you back as soon as possible and the service will continue completely as normal from this point.
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Due to the large volume of calls, we are advising those wishing to make contact to email assist@cic-eap.co.uk. Please include the following information in your email: Name, Organisation, Contact phone number, The best time to receive a return a call (preferably with a 2 hour time window). A brief sentence on the reason for calling

CiC want to reassure you that no matter what happens over the coming weeks we will have a Senior Clinical Manager on duty at all times and ready to receive urgent and/or critical incident response calls 24/7.

For any queries regarding webinars, please contact your Account Manager or contact us at enquiries@cic-eap.co.uk for further information.

Skype Sessions;

- in case of self-isolation or quarantine, we are able to offer one-off online video-based sessions for those who feel they need some support during their isolation.

Helpsheets.

- Our online platform Well-Online has an extensive catalogue of information on various subjects that may help at this time. We have pieces on stress management, dealing with uncertainty, financial difficult and debt management, exercise, CBT and much more. We would encourage all to take a moment to look at some of the information we have on our website.

Useful Resources

NHS: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/
WHO: https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

*All information correct as per NHS, WHO or GOV at the time of writing.