

## Stephenson Centre for Wellbeing (SCW) resources during the COVID-19 outbreak

Covid-19 dominates the headlines with worrying predictions. It has affected all of our lives and has dealt pupils a particularly poor hand. At a time when many have the anxiety of exams, there is also the fear surrounding the coronavirus pandemic. If that were not enough, you are now home from boarding school prematurely, with no idea when you will be back.

In these uncertain times, it is common to feel anxious and low, a normal reaction to an extreme challenge. Some of you may know what anxiety and low moods feel like; others may experience anxiety as physical symptoms of fatigue, aches and pains, irritability, social withdrawal and loss of confidence.

### **Spot the emotion**

Recognise your emotional state and explore what is bothering you most. Are you fearful about your health, that of your family member or a vulnerable person? Alternatively, perhaps it is the disruption to your life at such a critical time, or the difficulty seeing divorced or separated parents or a loved one.

Recognise your feelings and express them. Write a diary about the impact of Covid-19 on your emotional state. By expressing your emotions and thinking about the impact, you will be more able to sustain a balanced perspective on this crisis.

### **Spot the thinking errors caused by anxiety**

Anxiety affects how we think. We believe our thoughts are true but emotions can distort how we think. For example:

- Black and white, all or nothing thinking, 'if I don't get full marks then I am a failure';
- Unrealistic expectations of oneself and fixed rules, 'I have to achieve this or my life is not worth living.', 'it has to be this way or not at all';
- Selective thinking, homing in on what's worrying and ignoring the good stuff;
- Catastrophizing, making mountains out of molehills;
- Personalising, 'it's my fault';
- Mistaking feelings for facts;
- Jumping to (negative) conclusions.

Spot these unhelpful thoughts, recognise them as distortions and challenge them.

### **Appreciate the significant demands made on your emotional state.**

B Block: you face the significant transition from Eton-pupil to University-student / Gap-year traveller. The institution, which has held you for almost five years, may seem to have fallen away abruptly. As a result, you may feel 'at sea', anchorless and disorientated.

Spend time reflecting on experiences at Eton, proudest moments, not just prizes and sporting successes, but more personal achievements. Think about the important people from your time at Eton. Plan how you will maintain the friendships that you have built here in the future. Accept you will feel disorientated for a while.

The Stephenson Centre for Wellbeing will be available to current pupils to provide support and guidance during the Summer Half, even though you may not be permitted to return to school.

The following websites have been compiled by SCW and Oxford University. They offer details and updates around the rapidly changing public health situation in the UK and abroad, including advice on what to do if you develop symptoms of COVID-19:

- The [Public Health England website](#) and [Twitter](#) page
- The [Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\) website](#)
- The GOV.UK [government response website](#)

## Mental Health

- [Young Minds](#) advises about what to do if anxious about COVID-19.
- The [Child Mind Institute](#) provides information for families.
- [Student Minds](#) – this site provides a range of resources for people with existing health conditions, and who are struggling with social distancing, or have experienced xenophobia
- [The Mental Health Foundation](#)
- [BBC advice](#) on protecting your mental health
- World Health Organisation – [mental health considerations](#) and [coping with stress](#) during the outbreak
- NHS advice on [self-isolation](#) and [dealing with stress, anxiety or depression](#)
- [NHS mental health apps](#) – the majority of these are free
- [COVID-19 and Anxiety](#) – advice from the charity Anxiety UK
- [COVID-19 and OCD](#) – advice from the charity OCD-UK
- Advice from [The Blurt Foundation](#) who support people with depression and anxiety
- [Eating Disorders and Coronavirus](#) – advice from Beat, the UK's eating disorder charity
- [Advice from UK charity The Mix](#) – The Mix provides free, confidential support for young people under 25 via online, social and mobile

## Supporting the Community

Should you be available and willing to volunteer in the school then do email [volunteer@etoncollege.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@etoncollege.org.uk)

## Activities and Distractions

We appreciate that the uncertainty around academic arrangements for the coming months will be a key concern. During this period of uncertainty, it remains important to take care of your physical and mental wellbeing so with that in mind, here are some suggestions of free activities to keep you occupied in your spare time:

### Staying in touch and informed:

- Podcasts are available on the school's [Firefly](#) site.
- There are routine [BBC podcasts](#) , and many other outlets

### Audiobooks:

- Audiobooks are available on the [BBC](#) or elsewhere, such as [freeaudiobooks](#)
- You can search the School library catalogue here: [School Library catalogue](#)

### Culture:

- **BBC 'In Our Time':** [IOT](#) is a live BBC radio discussion series exploring a wide variety of cultural topics, presented by Melvyn Bragg.
- Take a [Virtual tour](#) around one of these museums
- [Radio 3's Words and Music](#) is a weekly journey of discovery, weaving together a range of music with poetry and prose read by leading actors.
- Enjoy streams from world-class opera houses that are being shared in response to the outbreak – have a look at the [Metropolitan Opera](#) and [Paris Opera](#) websites
- Get outside and enjoy some fresh air – go for a walk or take the opportunity to try out running with the NHS [Couch to 5k app](#)
- Try out some [online yoga](#)
- Learn [how to make a home gym from household items while self-isolating](#)
- Read [100 useful things you can do to kill boredom if you're quarantined at home because of coronavirus](#)

### Mindfulness, meditation or forms of yoga<sup>1</sup>:

- Practice Mindfulness with an audio session from the [Oxford Mindfulness Centre](#), or explore the resources on the [Ten Percent Happier website](#)

### Positive psychology, and other forms of self-help:

- [Action for Happiness](#) take action to increase wellbeing in homes, workplaces, schools and local communities.
- [The School of Life](#) is a global organisation helping people lead more fulfilled lives.
- [IPPA](#)– the International Positive Psychology Association has partnered with the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California at Berkeley to produce a series of short interviews with leading positive psychology researchers and practitioners.

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<sup>1</sup>The following suggestions come from *Can We Be Happier?: Evidence and Ethics* (2020) by Professor Richard Layard

- [Sunday Assembly London](#) is part of a global, secular community that celebrates life.

**Educators teaching the skills of living:**

- [Effective Altruism](#) and how to take action.

**Policy experts promoting wellbeing:**

- [OECD](#) - The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation that works to build better policies for better lives.
- Sustainable Development Solutions Network – the [UNSDSN](#) mobilizes global scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development, including the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement. SDSN works closely with United Nations agencies, multilateral financing institutions, the private sector, and civil society.
- **World Happiness Summit**– the [WHS](#) will be a 3-day event in 2021 that unites the world’s leading experts in the science of happiness and wellbeing with a global audience to learn practical tools for a happier life.

**Research:**

World Happiness Report [2020](#)

Global Happiness and Wellbeing Policy Report, *The Origins of Happiness* [2019](#)