

RESOURCES ON WELLBEING, ANXIETY, UNCERTAINTY & BEREAVEMENT

We are all experiencing change and challenge because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions. With this comes uncertainty and anxiety and other challenges to wellbeing. And some are facing bereavement, with heightened challenges because of the restrictions on gathering together.

Sometimes, it's really important to be able to talk to someone. ChaplaincyPlus (www.chaplaincyplus.org.uk) gives Birmingham professionals space to be heard. We provide a wellbeing listening service, a neutral and safe space for you to explore issues of life and work whatever your beliefs or background. You are welcome to contact us:

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Sometimes, it's important to have access to resources. Here are some resources on both general wellbeing and bereavement that may be helpful.

WELLBEING

- **Government guidance:**

Here is the government Covid-19 guidance on mental health and wellbeing:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

- **The Waiting Room (TWR):**

TWR provides "Birmingham and Solihull health and wellbeing services at your fingertips". It is an online resource library of information and support, providing an alternative approach to take control of our own health and wellbeing: <https://the-waitingroom.org/> There's no charge for using TWR, but some of the services within TWR may charge a fee for their services if you choose actively to engage with them.

- **Local telephone helpline:**

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust, in partnership with others, is offering a dedicated helpline to provide emotional help, guidance and reassurance to people in Birmingham and Solihull who may be finding the current Coronavirus situation overwhelming. Contact details and opening hours are listed here <https://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/our-services/our-response-to-coronavirus/mental-health-support-offer/> and are set out in an [information flyer](#).

- **MHFA England resources:**

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England <https://mhfaengland.org/> offers expert guidance and training to support mental health in the workplace and beyond. It offers free downloadable resources

<https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/>, including material on:

- Remote working (for everyone and for Mental Health First Aiders) <https://mhfaengland.org/remote-working-resources/>
- My whole self <https://mhfaengland.org/my-whole-self/>

- Every mind matters <https://mhfaengland.org/every-mind-matters/>
- For workplaces <https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/resource/?id=92ad5582-3ca5-e811-8147-e0071b668081>
- Address your stress – <https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/resource/?id=48b51c37-3ca5-e811-8147-e0071b668081> - which includes the following “Weekly Wellbeing Check-up”:

WEEKLY WELLBEING CHECK-UP
Try using this list each week to check in with your mental health

#ADDRESS YOUR STRESS

Where's my mental health today?
How do I feel today?
Mentally?
Physically?

Looking after my wellbeing
Am I drinking enough water and eating a balanced diet?
How did I sleep last night?
Did I feel rested when I woke up?
Is there anything I can improve?

How's my thinking today?
How are my thoughts making me feel?
Am I having unhelpful thoughts?
For free resources on spotting and challenging unhelpful thoughts, visit getselfhelp.co.uk or create Your Mind Plan with Every Mind Matters

My Stress Container
How full is my container?
Am I using helpful coping strategies?
Are they working?
Learn about your stress container here: mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources

MHFA England There are simple steps you can take to #AddressYourStress. Check out our resources at mhfaengland.org

- **Mind – helpline and information hub:**

Mental health charity Mind offers a helpline and an information hub: “If you’re finding things hard emotionally right now, you’re not alone. We’re here to provide information and support”.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/coronavirus-we-are-here-for-you/> This includes information on:

- Mental health tips for remote working <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/coronavirus-supporting-yourself-and-your-team/>
- Anxiety <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/anxiety-and-panic-attacks/about-anxiety/>
- Loneliness <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/loneliness/about-loneliness/>
- Bereavement <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/about-bereavement/>

- **5 ways to wellbeing during the Covid-19 crisis:**

Here’s a blog on “Five ways to wellbeing in a time of social distancing”: <https://neweconomics.org/2020/03/five-ways-to-wellbeing-at-a-time-of-social-distancing>

5 ways to wellbeing were originally researched and developed by the New Economics Foundation in 2008:

- Connect
- Be active
- Take notice
- Learn
- Give

Find out more here: <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>

- **Gratitude:**

When we're under stress, how can we find our way to calm and positivity? Whilst it's important to stay informed, we have to work not to get swept up in fear, worry and panic, through the challenges of this season, according to Dr Elise Bialylew, a doctor of psychiatry. As Eckhart Tolle said, "Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance". Dr Elsie Bialylew's blog explains "5 gratitude exercises to stop you spiralling into despair": <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/5-gratitude-exercises-to-stop-you-spiralling-into-despair/>

- **Mediation podcasts:**

Chris Whittington was introduced to meditation at 19 when living at the Benedictine Monastery of Prinknash Abbey. Chris spent a period as COO of the World Community for Christian Meditation, and regularly gives talks and leads retreats across the UK. He is also a Partner and Head of Education Law at Anthony Collins Solicitors in Birmingham. Here are links to two podcasts from Chris: keep an eye out for others on the ChaplaincyPlus website.

- <https://chaplaincyplus.org.uk/becoming-places-of-peace-podcast/>
- <https://chaplaincyplus.org.uk/establishing-peace-podcast-1/>

- **Prayers:**

Australian cartoonist Leunig offers some wonderfully open prayers on his website: <https://www.leunig.com.au/works/prayers> These include prayers on the following themes:

- Change
- Slowing down and simplifying
- Contradictions
- Love and fear
- Presence

BEREAVEMENT

- **Secondary loss:**

For any deaths through the current Covid-19 restrictions, there is a secondary loss to deal with: many of the rituals/relationships that help us with grief aren't available, because of the restrictions on funerals and social gatherings. Grief is a social emotion.

- **Grief is messy:**

People talk about "stages of grief" and Kubler-Ross identified five stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. However, grief is not a staged process: it's messy. (There's a powerful image comparing a (neat!) graph of "Stages of Grief" with a (scribbly, messy!) graph of "My experience", if you scroll down this article, "9 Ways to Help Manage the Painful Grieving Process": <http://secondwindmovement.com/grieving-process/>)

- **Support for a bereaved colleague:**

The business-focused advice from London's Canary Wharf multi-faith Chaplaincy is to make contact – to say something. And the following are recommended – you can read more detail on this link:

<http://canarywharfchaplaincy.co.uk/for-employees/supporting-a-bereaved-colleague/>

- Don't minimise or philosophise
- Don't compare
- Don't try to fix it – it's not broken
- Don't think they will just get back to normal

- Do reach out

- **Grief and healing:**

We may be embracing our own deep grief, as well as encountering the grief of colleagues, through this season. Here are the headlines “Eight lessons from Brene Brown on healing through grief” - you can read more here:

<https://blog.funeralone.com/grief-and-healing/brene-brown-grief/>

1. Know the difference between sympathy and empathy
2. Re-define and embrace courage, especially when it’s hard
3. Forget perfection, strive for authenticity
4. Take risks by staying vulnerable
5. Ditch the scripts, keep it real
6. Embrace pain and discomfort
7. Stop running from grief
8. Lastly, remember the power of vulnerability

- **Acknowledging the cost of loss:**

There is a mystery in life and death. “Tis a fearful thing” by Yehudi Halevi, a poem written in the 12th century, recognises that it is both a fearful thing and a human thing to love what death has touched. You can read this short poem here http://www.yourdaily poem.com/listpoem.jsp?poem_id=3265: it finishes with the lines:

For your life has lived in me,
your laugh once lifted me,
your word was gift to me.

To remember this brings painful joy.

‘Tis a human thing, love,
a holy thing, to love
what death has touched.

- **Further support:**

Several UK bereavement charities and organisations offer guidance, advice, and support to deal with bereavement during this pandemic, both the practical and psychological aspects. When you are bereaved, it’s important to stay in touch with other people. Support is available from:

- The bereavement care charity [Cruse](#) is helping families affected by Covid-19. You can find a broad range of guidance, including easy read fact sheets, on the [Cruse website](#). You can also contact the charity’s free national helpline on 0808 808 1677 or email them at helpline@cruse.org.uk.
- The Good Grief Trust - [Coronavirus Bereavement Advice](#)
- At A Loss - [Dealing with bereavement and grief during the Covid-19 pandemic](#)

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