

Managing Home-working

Please use these ideas in a way that is meaningful to you - fits your own values, attitude and environment – one size does not fit all!

At this time of general anxiety about our work, well-being and the unknown, it can be difficult not to allow a build-up of fear and anxiety in ourselves. But it is important to keep perspective, to manage our fears and not to live in our imagination. What we imagine is often much worse than the reality of things.

Something first on **boundaries** - it could be very easy to lose sight of our boundaries whilst working from home – home and work are easily blurred. So now, more than ever, it is important to hold tight the space between the two. Make physical and mental boundaries between work and play, and please do play...

Particularly for those in **management** positions - Of course you will be a first port of call for others and you will want to offer all the help you can, but have a good sense of what you are responsible for and what is not your responsibility – supporting the wellbeing of others should not come at a cost to our own wellbeing.

Other ideas:

- To maintain good mental health under pressure it is important to keep **connected** with our families, friends and colleagues and to use this support system to express our worries. Don't be afraid to do this, people get a lot of satisfaction being there for others.
- Equally, if you are spending a lot more time with family than any of you are used to, take time out from one another, in this way we can continue to offer one another **quality time**, not just time.
- We are all making this up as we go along – and the children especially may feel they are out of control and this is a scary place for them. You don't need to have all the answers, but you can show them that you are in **control** of things at home.
- Take care of the basics - **eat** well, keep **hydrated**, **sleep** well and **exercise**. Exercise is more important in terms of the natural anti-depressant hormones it stimulates than getting that six pack. There will be pressure on all these areas of our lives, but they need to be prioritised, so give them time and space.
- Taking care of the basics also gives us a sense of purpose and autonomy, which we may feel we have lost at the moment. Anything you feel you can usefully take **control** of in terms of work and home life, attend to it, however small.
- Keep **informed**; but try not to search endlessly for information - you will hear soon enough if there is something new to know. And make sure you use reputable sources - there are some links in the Mental Health Foundation resource below.
- If you are connecting with work colleagues, try **little and often** outside of the bigger meetings. Make sure you talk about non work or virus-related things – where will you be going on holiday when you get the chance? how is the lumbago? what were your teenage crushes? Etc ..

- **Writing down our thoughts** can be very helpful for unburdening ourselves and sparks our creativity, which we need right now. So even if it is one statement filled with expletives, its better out than in, get it written down somewhere. Don't write a journal unless that is your kind of thing – it adds daily pressure and if you don't do it every day and you think you should, it may become another burden.
- **Humour** is essential for mental health – to maintain our humour we must use it, don't be too careful about saying the 'wrong' things if it was OK before the virus it should be OK now. Humour helps us manage our fears and in a safe way face our fears. In whatever way you got or gave your laughs before all this change, continue to make that a part of your lives now.
- As I said before, it can be helpful to **help others** - it can make us feel useful at a time when we don't feel we have control - so see what might be needed in your local community and offer what you can. Also, think about what you can offer those you live with – you have the contact you didn't have before, maybe you can do things for them now you couldn't before.
- Know that **things will change** again, and that the change we are coming to terms with now was unexpected, but it doesn't have to overwhelm us. How we respond to change is the key - so be kind to yourself and others, be generous and be hopeful.

Useful links

[Mental Health Foundation](#)

[Mind](#)

theGrogroup [virtual learning and support](#) programmes