



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Northamptonshire Action for Happiness Helpful Hints & Tips for Keeping Physically and Mentally Well – Week Two

Hello all

The sun has been shining this week which I am sure has lifted our spirits a little at this challenging time. The weekend will bring colder weather so as promised here is Week Two of our support at what may be a difficult time. Again, please feel free to cascade this far and wide.

We will also be regularly sharing support ideas and positive messages so please follow us @A4HNorthants on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Maintaining Emotional Resilience during the Covid-19 Outbreak

A few ideas using the GREAT in Great Dream

Giving: In these restricted circumstances what can we do in terms of giving? Calling other friends who are stuck inside may be a good place to start- a perfect time to ring to ask, 'how are you?' If you are not self-isolating and are able to help your neighbours the Covid-19 Mutual Aid group is a great place to start, can be found on Facebook or following the link below: <https://covidmutualaid.org/> From there you will be able to find what support you might contribute to in your local neighbourhood.

Relating: It is very important to keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. There are loads of ways of keeping in touch even when separated - it is good to see each other using FaceTime, Skype, WhatsApp. Why not arrange to meet-up for a coffee and chat - using one of these platforms. It is important to maintain some normal routines in these extraordinary times, so try and 'meet-up' virtually in your usual groups, at your usual time, use photos to help share each other's world. To have virtual group meet-ups try ZOOM, Hangouts or Microsoft Teams – both free APPs available.

Exercising: It is important to keep moving to keep all body systems functioning well and to avoid swollen ankles (venous return etc). Take a look at these simple online resources and virtual sessions put together by Northamptonshire Sport during Covid-19 social distancing: <https://www.northamptonshiresport.org/stay-active-at-home> (don't miss the belly dancing!)

Walking outside – the exercise and being in the fresh air will raise mood. Governments advice makes clear that you can leave the house for one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk or cycle - alone or with members of your household always observing strict social distancing measures ensuring you are two metres apart from anyone outside of your household.

Gardening is a great form of exercise and provides opportunity to feel productive and enjoy nature. Gardening has been shown to have therapeutic value in terms of reducing anxiety, depression and blood pressure. Additionally, there is the joy of planting seeds and seeing plants grow, as well as the practicality of growing food in times of stretched resources. You can grow tomatoes and beans in pots, indoors as well as outside. Loads of U-tube videos to help on this... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kNNyMhvdmY>

Awareness: There is a lot of news coverage of Covid-19 which after a while can lower mood. It is important to recognise the affect this has and take steps to be informed but reduce the amount and time that you listen- AfH Great guidance on this <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/news/covid-19-how-to-respond>.

Important to be aware of the positive as well as the negative - we are in the season of spring at last- it is a time of new growth! Take time to notice the number of spring flowers that are coming out and buds of leaves in the trees. Have a go at drawing one - just pick up a pen or a pencil and a piece of paper - focus on what you are seeing and what you are doing, how does it make you feel? You may feel experience a feeling of absorption, of being somewhere else which is a nice feeling and can lift mood.

Trying out new things We've just suggested drawing... not everyone's bag but important to find something that is meaningful to you.... What has been on your list of things you have wanted to do 'when I have time'? Likely to be a U-tube clip to help. How about doing something you usually do but trying it online- e.g. playing scrabble with a friend online instead of face-to face? If there are groups you usually attend can you agree to send a photo of what you are doing instead to the members of your group?

Ideas for the DREAM part of GREAT DREAM will follow next week. A big thank you to Sue Griffiths who is part of our Steering Group for writing these ideas.

We wanted to add in something about children this week as schools are now closed and found this great article: -

<https://thriveglobal.com/stories/5-tips-for-talking-to-your-children-about-coronavirus/>

We also found that LEGO has picked up on the calendar idea and has suggested a 30-day LEGO challenge, various variations can be found online but our very own Val Payne created the following for her six-year-old grandson: -

20 Day LEGO Challenge

Follow the instructions for each day. Use your imagination and have fun!

Day 1 NASA needs you to build a new ROCKET or SPACESHIP.	Day 2 Your family want you to build a new HOUSE for them.	Day 3 Disney hire you to build a new STAR WARS MOVIE SET.	Day 4 Build the tallest TOWER.	Day 5 You are stranded on an island. Build a RAFT to get home.
Day 6 Build the fastest CAR around.	Day 7 The dogs escape. Build a FENCED area to keep them safe in.	Day 8 Design and build your dream BEDROOM.	Day 9 Disney asks you to create a new 'RIDE.'	Day 10 Build your NAME in Lego.
Day 11 Use at least 4 of your Lego people and make up a STORY.	Day 12 Pizza Party! Make a PIZZA out of Lego.	Day 13 Build a TREE HOUSE for you and your friends.	Day 14 Design and build a rainbow LOLLIPOP.	Day 15 Build something on wheels.
Day 16 Pick out 40 Lego pieces and build something.	Day 17 Build something from a book you have read.	Day 18 Design and build a HOUSE for the dogs.	Day 19 Build a VOLCANO.	Day 20 Make a gift for someone in your family.

My favourite day was _____ because _____

As you can see, I am co-ordinating this weekly update but I'd appreciate the support of others to generate content. I would love to hear your ideas and feedback, so please feel free to get in touch.

Suzy Dion

Northamptonshire Action for Happiness Co-Ordinator

suzy.dion@nhs.net