

# KEEPING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH IN CHECK

**NHS**

Portsmouth Hospitals  
NHS TRUST

**SAMARITANS**



**Alan Mak MP**

**A FREE information  
booklet from your local  
Member of Parliament**

# INTRODUCTION FROM YOUR LOCAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Our mental health and our physical health are just as important as each other. That's why, particularly at the moment, we need to make sure that we, our friends and our family look after our mental health as much as possible.

I hope that this short guide will give you tips and information to help you look after your mental health during a period that can be unsettling for lots of people across our constituency and the wider country.

You can find the latest COVID-19 guidance and information from the Government by visiting [Gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) and [AlanMak.org.uk/COVID19](https://www.alanmak.org.uk/COVID19)

To keep in touch with my work locally, please signup for my monthly e-mail newsletter by visiting [AlanMak.org.uk/Newsletter](https://www.alanmak.org.uk/Newsletter) or following me on social media including [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).



**Alan Mak MP**  
**Member of Parliament for the Havant Constituency**



# LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH WHEN YOU'RE AT HOME

**It's really important to make sure that you have a structure to your day when you're at home, so here's a 6-point plan for your day:**

## 1. Plan

Make sure you don't stay in your pyjamas all day – keep a regular routine that will keep your confidence up. And try to start your day at the same time that you usually would, because your body will stay in its natural rhythm.

## 2. Move

Keeping active and exercising when you are able to is key to reducing stress and increasing energy levels and helps your sleep pattern. And if you're stuck for motivation, there are plenty of exercise routines on YouTube that you could look at!

## 3. Relax

The NHS website has plenty of relaxation techniques for you to try. They can help relieve stress and help give you a sense of well-being.

## 4. Connect

Find creative ways to keep in touch with your friends, colleagues and family. Just because you can't visit other households as much, it doesn't mean that you can't speak to those closest to you over the phone or via social media or video calling. Have an online coffee break with your colleague or an after work call with your friends or family.

## 5. Reflect

At the end of the day, think about what went well and what you could improve on. What were you grateful for during the day? How can you make tomorrow better? Think about writing down your thoughts so you can go back to them at a later date.

## 6. Sleep

In these difficult times, you might have trouble getting a good night's sleep. To improve your sleep, try and stick to your usual bedtime and get up in the morning when you usually would. And try to avoid using your phone, tablet, computer or TV before bedtime.



## STICK TO THE FACTS

**It's really easy to become overwhelmed by all the news surrounding Coronavirus.**

Find a credible source that you can trust – such as [AlanMak.org.uk/COVID19](https://www.alanmak.org.uk/COVID19), [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) or the NHS website. And fact-check information that you get from social media and other people. The Government has set up a Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp, which covers the most common questions about the coronavirus.

You should also think about how inaccurate information could affect your friends and family too.

It's really important to think about limiting the amount of time that you spend watching, reading or listening to the news surrounding coronavirus.

Some people have found it easier to limit themselves to checking the news twice a day. It can be very distressing having large numbers of breaking-news alerts on your phone during the day.



# MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The vast majority of people across the UK have not experienced the kind of social distancing measures that have been put in place in our lifetimes.

So it's okay to feel a little unsettled or worried. Despite this, it's still important to make sure that you look after your own mental health if you are over 55 and living alone or shielding.

- 1. Keep up a routine**, which will be helpful to give your day a sense of order and will help you stay in control.
- 2. Limit your intake of news**, so that you aren't overwhelmed by the coverage of the coronavirus. Hearing about COVID-19 all the time can be stressful and worrying.
- 3. Keep yourself entertained** by watching more films or television or listening to the radio.

**4. Stay in touch with your friends and family** by planning when you will call or video-call them. This also helps you look forward to something later on in the week.

**5. Try and stay as active as possible** by moving around your house or flat and trying to do some light exercise outdoors if you can.



# HELPING OTHERS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

**Each year, around 1 in 4 people experience mental health problems. Most of us know a family member, colleague or friend who has struggled with their mental health.**

According to the **Every Mind Matters** campaign, there are a number of things you can do to help

- **Express concern** by letting someone know you're worried. It's a good way to start a conversation about how they are feeling, and it also shows the person that you care and that you have time for them.
- **Reassure them**, because the first time someone mentions their worries is a huge step. Let them know that you're there for them if and when they need to talk.
- **Be patient** as you won't always know the full story. Just being there for someone can be a huge help if they want to open up to you at a later date.

- **Look after yourself** when looking after others. It can be upsetting to hear someone you care about in distress. Make sure that you make time for yourself so that you can relax and do things that you enjoy, whilst taking into account the Government guidelines on social distancing.
- **Offer some practical help** like an act of kindness. Offer to do some shopping for them or try and find some practical information if they are not in a position to do it themselves.



# USEFUL CONTACTS AND WEBSITES

## **Samaritans**

Call: 116 123 Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Calls to 116 123 are free and will not appear on itemised phone bills

## **NHS 111 online**

[111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk)

## **NHS Every Mind Matters Campaign**

[nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters](https://nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters)

## **Mental Health Foundation**

[mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus](https://mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus)

## **Mind – The Mental Health Charity**

[mind.org.uk/coronavirus-we-are-here-for-you](https://mind.org.uk/coronavirus-we-are-here-for-you)

Call: 0300 123 3393 (open 9am–6pm, Mon–Fri)

## **gov.uk/coronavirus**

[gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support](https://gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support)

## **Alan Mak MP website**

[AlanMak.org.uk/COVID19](https://AlanMak.org.uk/COVID19)



**I hope you found this guide useful. To keep in touch with my work locally, please sign up for my monthly e-mail newsletter by visiting [AlanMak.org.uk/Newsletter](http://AlanMak.org.uk/Newsletter)**

**You can also contact me by e-mail**  
[AlanMak.org.uk/Contact](mailto:AlanMak.org.uk/Contact)

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Nothing in this booklet constitutes individual medical, legal, financial or other advice from Alan Mak MP or his staff. Every resident should consult their own advisors for such matters on an individual basis taking into account their own circumstances.

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