

I'm a young person who is worried about the coronavirus - what advice can you give me?



Most of us are feeling concerned about the uncertainty of the current situation, and this will include young people. That is completely understandable.

It's important that all of us to look to the people we trust to support us. For you, this might include your family members or carers, your trusted friends, and perhaps your teachers if you are able to contact them. Reach out to them to help you make sense of things - be open if you have fears and seek answers. Your questions may be specific and feel trivial, but that's fine. If face-to-face contact is not always an option, find other ways to connect with people, including using technology.

There is lots of information available at present, but some of it comes from more trusted sources than others. Finding your way through this with someone you trust can help you to feel more on top of things. Watching the news and spending time on social media may help to an extent (and particularly if social media helps you to connect with those who are important to you). But focusing on the continuous flow of information about coronavirus may be unhelpful, and may have the negative effect of making people more anxious. Stepping away from it at times makes sense for us all.

Young people are often fantastic sources of help to each other, and you may turn to your friends for support – as well as being able to offer your own support to others. Looking after each other, being kind to those around us, can certainly help us to feel better in an unknown situation. But also be mindful that some people may speak in a way which alarms others unnecessarily, so 'protect' yourself where you can from conversations which you sense are not helpful to you and others.

You may feel that your own mental health is being affected, and perhaps you already have mental health difficulties or are receiving treatment. Talk to those you trust, it's really important to us as human beings that someone else understands how we feel. Even when life is disrupted, stick to your routines where possible, stay in touch with your

close friends, and keep trying to do what you enjoy. All these things help give us a balanced sense of how we're feeling in ourselves. Perhaps ask your parents or carers to help you with this.

If there is a gap in your treatment, or it's disrupted in another way, talk to your parent or carer about what you're finding difficult and what could help you to feel better. This may be something practical, like making a call to a friend or listening to music. Ensure that a bit of this happens each day. It won't be a solution, but it may well help you through this time.

There is lots of advice on 'On My Mind', our website for young people created with young people: www.annafreud.org/onmymind. This includes our self-care resource with over 90 simple strategies that young people have told us help them when they are feeling low or anxious. There is also an urgent help page with a list of organisations that offer 24 hour support via text, phone and email.



For more information and advice about looking after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak, visit www.annafreud.org/coronavirus