Institute of
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Dún Laoghaire

'Ways to Protect Your Mental Health' during the Covid-19

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1) Acknowledge your feelings. It is normal to feel more anxious, stressed and insecure. Be gentle on yourself, it is OK to not feel OK.

2) Try to have a sleep/wake routine, as it will help you feel secure and give a structure to your day. Avoid news or social media about the Coronavirus prior to going to bed.

3) Have a daily routine. A plan for your day can help you feel hopeful and give you a sense of purpose. Do some enjoyable things each day. Break any work you are doing with regular rest and relaxation times.

4) Eat well. Anxiety can affect your appetite, sometimes causing nausea or stomach upset. If this is a problem for you, try to eat smaller meals more frequently.

5) Stay in touch with family and friends. Feeling connected helps us during times of stress.

6) Breathing and relaxation - is a really effective way of managing stress and anxiety. Taking some time each day to do some breathing exercises, guided relaxation, or meditation, can bring down your heart rate and reduce feelings of anxiety.

7) Being aware of the power of our thoughts. Anxious thoughts can lead to anxious feelings, they impact on how we feel! BUT, thinking positively and more rationally can reduce those anxious feelings. Some ways we can change our thoughts to manage our anxiety are:

Acceptance: Accepting where we are at instead of fighting against it can be helpful, as well as accepting ourselves as we are and knowing we are good enough!

Isolation v's protection: We can see staying at home as protecting and minding ourselves, instead of isolating. This can reduce our feelings of stress and fear.

Control v's choice: Although cocooning does not feel like a choice, you can tell yourself that you do have choices about how to spend your day.

Using 'positive self talk': Research shows that the more positively we think, the better we feel. During this difficult time, it can be useful to tell yourself, 'I can cope with this', 'this will pass' or similar thoughts that will help you feel more hopeful.

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