

WELLBEING AND LEARNING AT HOME DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES

This tip sheet provides some ideas and strategies to support your wellbeing during the learning from home stage of our country's response to managing and eliminating COVID-19.

The need to stay in a bubble is an unusual experience for everyone and right now your part of a global event in which over a billion people are in some form of lockdown. By staying at home, you're helping to address the COVID-19 situation, keeping yourself and other people in your community safe. But spending time away from your friends, from school and your support networks may be a challenge.

The length of the school closures, and the possibility that you school may need to stay in or return to the staying at home stage for longer than just the first 4 weeks can be frustrating. It's important to keep in mind that this stage of managing or eliminating the virus is not forever. Don't be surprised if you go through a whole range of emotions at this time – you won't be alone in this and it's completely normal.

Boredom Relief Fear Novelty Frustration Fed Up
Lonely Pleased Excitement Sluggish Energised Worried
Rested Anticipation Hopeful Conflict

With school starting, it's time to set up some new routines shifting your focus onto the work and activities your school has set up for you. Your teacher is there to help you with your learning, and there may also be another adult you can look to for support. There are lots of things you can do within your own bubble to help you make the most of this new way of learning from home.

YOUR MIND, YOUR FRIEND

When you are in your bubble, your mind can be your best ally when it comes to keeping your spirits up. Here are some tips to keep your mind and thinking healthy.

- If you are feeling confused, seek information from reliable sources or talk to a trusted adult.
- Think about other challenges you have faced and how you managed them. Remind yourself that you can deal with this too.
- Take a look at now from the future and see yourself as part of history. What will you be thinking about this in one year's time? What stories will you be telling?
- Remind your mind that this is temporary: like a season, it too will pass.
- Think about your sources of strength and support and the people who are working hard to make a difference. Be grateful for the good things in the world.
- Keep critiquing your world – question, investigate, consider and examine the information, viewpoints, values and your own thoughts.

Feelings are made up of different parts.

Feelings show up in our body.

We can listen to our body for signals of how we are feeling.

Everyone has thoughts about the things that happen.

How people think influences how they feel and behave.

Being at home can be really stressful if life at home is hard and you don't have the support networks that you usually rely on. If things are really tough, there are some places you can contact at the end of this tip sheet – hang in there and remember you're not alone.

ADD RHYTHM TO YOUR DAY

As a new term dawns, it's a good time to firm up a daily routine for yourself. This will help you stay on track with schoolwork. More importantly, regular routines and rhythms are really good for your wellbeing. Create a schedule that includes a bit of everything - school learning, physical exercise, relaxation time, and times to help out around the house. Try to get up at the same time each day, even if this is a bit later than when you're heading off to school, and think about getting out of those PJs when you're doing school work.

SET GOALS

Create a list of things you need each day and a list of things you want (and are able!) to do. Break down your day and tasks into smaller chunks and do one thing at a time. Tick them off your list. Be kind to yourself if you don't get everything on your list done. There is always tomorrow.

KEEP MOVING

Exercise is great for body and mind. Think about ways to maintain or increase your fitness. You could try some online yoga or set up your own backyard or inside for circuit training – you don't need much in or outdoor space or equipment for push ups, squats, lunges or crunches. And then there is just good old dancing and letting yourself go.

For more information, see:

[Ministry of Health Being Active](#)
and [Home Exercises by This Girl Can](#)

FIND WAYS TO BE CREATIVE

Don't forget to set aside time for things you enjoy doing. Consider developing a new skill or hobby or to finish off a creative project that you've had sitting around. Practise your drawing skills or think about entering a *short story competition*. Take a look at what other young people are doing through art during the COVID-19 experience **#KeepMakingArt**

SCREEN TIME

Keep your use of technology in balance. Arrange with your 'bubble' times that you will be device-free to give your eyes, body and mind rest. When you're not using your phone as your device for lessons, consider turning it off. Alternate time using devices with movement and other activities. Consider what content you are "feeding" your mind. Use self-control, perspective taking and empathy for others to stay safe and be safe online. Take the opportunity to use your digital skills, for example, Facebook's *Get Digital resources for Youth*, and discuss your ideas with others. Make your screen time social with video chats with people outside your bubble or movies nights or other shared media use inside your bubble. Talk about what you are doing and learning online and share any concerns with those you trust and respect.

MAKING TIME FOR MUSIC

Music can be an incredible source of strength and comfort. If you're into music, work out which songs are useful for different situations such as studying, calming you down, releasing tension or stress, or lifting your mood.

FAMILY TIMES

Staying in the bubble means much more time with the whānau and for some this may mean increased stress. Where possible, find ways to get some space from each other, alongside time together. Talking together about hopes and struggles is ideal, but if talking with the people at home is hard, then find someone outside your bubble to get some support from.

LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE

There are likely to be many silver linings in your bubble experience. Take time to consider your experience and reflect on your life. What will you tell your own children about this experience? The opportunity to slow down and live simply

may only occur this once in your lifetime. Take time to learn about yourself, how you respond to spending so much time at home and/or being less busy. Observe your values and priorities. Notice any reflections you have about your life and future and talk about the experience with others.

Reflect on the wider community and the opportunity for societal change. There are likely to be silver linings for our communities and wider society. Share your hope with others. For more information, read this Stuff article: *A test of national values*.

GET HELP

Check out the **Help for Mental Health Tip Sheet 3 in Module 1** for services to support you.

KEEPING AN EYE ON THE NEWS

Spending too much time watching or reading news can have a negative effect on your thinking. A regular daily update to keep informed about what's happening in Aotearoa New Zealand and the rest of the world is probably enough. Remember to use your

Reliable sources of information include:

- *Unite against COVID-19 – New Zealand government information on COVID-19*
- *Ministry of Health COVID-19 updates and latest information*
- *World Health Organization Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic*
- *World Health Organization Health Alert, available on WhatsApp*

critical thinking skills to evaluate whether information you read online is reliable and accurate, for example, checking the URL and the source, critiquing the quality and emotional tone of the article and checking the facts before you pass it on.

Learn more about the coronavirus using resources such as:

- *Nanogirl coronavirus resources for children and parents*
- *Talking COVID with the Prime Minister* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKNys5i8yIk).

KEEP CONNECTED

Connecting with others is vital to wellbeing. Keep in touch with friends and neighbours and find a way to be there for each other. Be kind and reach out to others who may need help at home or in the community. Find ways to give to others, for example, by providing a compliment, a kind word or a helping hand.

NEED EXTRA HELP?

Contact Need to Talk 1737 or What's Up 0800 942 8787 to talk and find out what supports are available.

