



Supporting yourself and those around you

Whilst there is understandably a lot of focus on physical health at the moment due to COVID-19, you also have a lot to offer in terms of supporting the mental health of your parents, siblings and friends.

Supporting others

Unfortunately, a lot of important events that were due to happen this year won't happen now. It's normal to feel disorientated, upset, angry and a range of other emotions. Some days you will not feel able to move past the emotion you are feeling, but other days you will adjust and adapt, this is when you are building resilience. Some days you will be able to feel gratitude and be able to focus and other days not.

It's worth remembering that your friends and family members will be going through the same range of emotions on different days, and just like you, some days for them will be better than others. On their bad days your connection with them is really important and it's a time when you can offer support.

As an example, a particular friend of yours might usually be the one you call when you aren't feeling great. They know what to say to support you, make you feel better, or just distract you by talking about something you have in common. Over recent days, even weeks, you might not have seen much of them on the group chat or spoken to them on the phone? Could you check in and reach out? They might really



appreciate hearing from you, and it might also be good for you to connect with them.

Often friends and family can benefit by thinking through 'unhelpful feelings' with someone else. We can help them gain a more positive mindset. Try working through this exercise below.

A reminder – you can choose to listen to and believe your inner critic or you can cultivate your inner coach, who can help you build resilience and solve problems you can come across:

Things your inner critic might say to you:

- 'You're no good at this...'
- 'Your life is a mess...'
- 'You have no style...'

These comments aren't helpful. They can dent your self-confidence and stop you from achieving your goals.

Questions to ask yourself as your inner coach:

- What would I like to achieve?
- What will I do first?
- When will I start?
- How will I know when I'm making progress?
- Who can help?
- What skills and experiences do I already have that will help me?
- What's in it for me?



Looking at these questions and thinking about your inner coach, what are some of the questions you could ask yourself in relation to your studies?

Technology is a game changer

Perhaps for the first time your family's relationship with technology is changing. Maybe a grandparent has recently come round to the idea of a smart phone so they can see your face, or a parent is video chatting with their colleagues for the first time. There has certainly been an increase in the use of technology and the way it's being used.

Remember that you are an expert in this area. You have probably been around technology all of your life and so have lots of experience with it.

You can support your parents and grandparents by teaching them how to use this new technology and how it can improve their ways of communicating. You can turn the tables and show your expertise, helping everyone to have fun and probably feel better

about themselves.

Re-discovering your talents

When our usual talents aren't being used sometimes it can be difficult to see our value in the way we used to. However, our talents and skills haven't disappeared, we just have to think a bit harder about how to use them.

For example, if you were great at English at school or college, you could write a short story and send it to a friend or perhaps an elderly relative in the post. If you're good at playing guitar could you do an online tutorial? Good at basketball? Perhaps set a skill challenge with your friends, and raise money for charity? Remembering and using our skills helps to support our mental health.

Top Tip: Write down three things that you are good at. Set a timer and give yourself 3 minutes to write as many ways that you could use this skill over the next few weeks and months to support others, just whatever comes to your mind. After the 3 minutes look at them and start to pull out any of them that you could actually do, and make a plan for how you could do this. Use this action plan below to help you.

Action plan template

What steps are you going to take when making decisions about your future? There is no right or wrong answer as this is your template.

When and how?

--	--	--

1st	2nd	3rd
------------	------------	------------

What will you do?

Notes: