

A message from Dr. Georgina Rowse, University of Sheffield

World IBD Day 2020 - and our world is looking very different to how we might have expected. For some of us the devastating impact of this pandemic might be the loss of loved ones, and we all send our kindest wishes and thoughts to those at this time. For others we are adjusting to a new way of living, juggling new responsibilities and roles, working from home, home schooling, not spending time with friends and family, and potentially being isolated.

Whilst we manage this difficult time there are a few things that can help our wellbeing:

1) Don't try to control everything

It can feel like things are out of control at the moment; the news is changing rapidly; the guidelines about what we can and cannot do is also changing quickly and at times can be confusing. Try not to spend too much time on all the things that you are not able to change and instead focus on what is in your control, what you can do, here and now, and when you can do it.



2) Keep to a routine

This may not apply to all of us, but our tendency is to veer towards going to bed later and getting up later when we don't have a timetable, which can impact on how much sleep we get, the quality of it, and also meal times. Try to stick to your usual sleep patterns, eat meals at their regular time (this helps our body clock stay on track) and maintain some routine throughout the day - despite how tempting it might be to stay in pyjamas all day!

3) Do positive things

Limit how much news and social media you consume, spend time doing things that are positive and try and make sure that every day you do something that makes you feel good. This might include doing some exercise, which boosts emotional wellbeing and can make us feel more energised too! Alternatively, try to experience nature. Being in nature is good for our wellbeing, it can reduce feelings of stress and boost positivity.



If you are not able to enjoy nature in the world outside or don't have a garden, a view through a window or tending to seedlings or a pot plant can all be beneficial.

4) Stay connected

Stay connected with friends and family. It may feel tiring to spend time on video communications, so don't feel this is the only way to stay in touch with people, send texts and messages, share photos and videos, phone people and send letters! We are social beings and it is important to maintain contact with people where we can and possibly in new and creative ways.



This includes being prepared to accept help and social support. There may be times, because of self-isolating or feeling unwell, that we need to ask for some help from those near us, friends, family or neighbours for example, and that is okay. Also, think about ways you might be able to help others. Even something small, like a phone call to a relative or ordering something online for someone who hasn't got internet shopping worked out, might help at this difficult time.

5) Be kind

And lastly be kind to yourself and others. This is an unprecedented time. We don't know how best to manage it; we are all learning as we go along and are having to cope with uncertainty and worry that we may not have faced before. These are normal, natural responses when we are faced with crises. We may be trying to juggle work with childcare, everything might seem to take longer than usual, and we might be more tired and slower at getting things done. That is all okay. Be as kind to yourself - it can take a bit of practice!



I hope you find some of these tips for positive wellbeing useful, remember this will pass and keep in touch with those you are close to.

If you might be interested in taking part in Dr Rowse's current project that is developing a mindfulness intervention for young people with IBD please visit [this page](#) where you can find more information.