



Star

## Coping with lockdown and online learning

The decision to move to remote learning will probably have raised a lot of questions and feelings for you. For some of us, it's an exciting opportunity to motivate and challenge ourselves in a different environment. For others, it may be frustrating or cause worry about the disruption to our usual routines.

When we are faced with situations which are new or challenging, we can grow in our resilience. We become more resilient when we face adversity and situations which are on the edge of our comfort zone. As we discover new ways of coping, we develop existing or new skills that we are able to use to help us deal with future challenges.

Here are our five top tips to help you during the next few weeks:

**1. Recognise that feelings of anxiety are completely normal.** If school closures and news headlines are making you feel anxious, you are not the only one. In fact, that's how most people will feel. Anxiety is a healthy function, which helps us make the decisions we need to, such as not spending time in large groups.

However, sometimes we feel anxious about things we didn't before. This can happen when there is a lot of uncertainty. You may notice you are worrying about things in the past or the future which you have no control over. If this is happening, talk to an adult you trust, such as your parents, carers, siblings or school staff. You can also try mindfulness - [www.mindfulnessforteens.com](http://www.mindfulnessforteens.com) is a really good place to start.

**2. Create distractions.** Think about separating things into 'things I can control' and 'things I can't control'. There are lots of things we are not responsible for controlling, which can feel really difficult. Try to focus on things such as how you spend your free time – can you learn a new language, grow some plants, create a new exercise routine, or use your creativity to make something new?

**3. Find new ways to connect with people.** It's natural to miss the connection with people that we rediscovered during the past few months. Think about what works for you – online games, video calls and messaging are all great ways to connect, but see if you can be creative with contacting people too. Are there people you can write to? If the current guidance allows it, can you go for a walk or bike ride with someone? How about contacting local care homes and seeing if their residents would like a letter or a card?

**4. Focus on you.** Is there something you've been meaning to do for ages? Maybe revise some French nouns, learn all the bones in the body or improve your ballet? The internet can be a wonderful resource for videos to teach you things that you wouldn't have had time to do before. Think about using the time you would have travelled to and from school as your 'you' time. [www.beheadstrong.uk](http://www.beheadstrong.uk) has lots of challenges you could try too, as well as ideas to focus on improving your mental health. \_

**5. Feel your feelings.** We can often feel afraid of our feelings – worrying that the difficult feelings will last forever and that we have no control over them. The best way to understand and control them is to feel them. Imagine your favourite sports team lost a match right at the last moment – you’d feel sad or disappointed, and then after a bit you’d feel other things too – the feelings don’t last forever. How we process our feelings is different for everyone. Some people manage their emotions and feelings by talking to someone, by being creative, by helping others or journaling. This can be a helpful way of naming some of our feelings – learn more at [www.feelingswheel.com](http://www.feelingswheel.com). If you’d like to talk to someone about how you’re feeling, these websites are really helpful too:

- **Childline** – Wellbeing support [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- **Kooth** – Online counselling [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)
- **Alumina** – Self Harm Online Support [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)
- **Good Grief Trust** – Bereavement Support [www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/find-support/for-young-people](http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/find-support/for-young-people)
- **Stem4** – Anxiety, Depression and Eating Disorders support [www.stem4.org.uk](http://www.stem4.org.uk)

Finally, please remember that your school is here to support you too. Reach out to your Head of Year or one of your teachers if you’d like someone to talk to.