

# Safeguarding & Prevent



Welcome to the sixth edition of the Creative Alliance Safeguarding Newsletter. Our Newsletter is produced every quarter, distributed to all Creative Alliance learners, employers and staff and is intended to raise awareness of Safeguarding, Prevent, British Values and how to keep learners safe and create a positive working environment.

Our previous newsletter was dedicated to Covid-19 and looking after your mental health. [Click here to read](#). This edition will continue to focus on mental health, as well as looking at coming out of lockdown.

## The Mental Health Foundation

The Mental Health Foundation launched their new guidebook last week, which explores the relationship between nature, wellbeing and mental health. [The Mental Health Foundation](#) is proud to have joined forces with [WWF UK](#) to bring you this free resource 'Thriving With Nature'.

It is packed with inspiration and information that will help you connect with nature throughout the year. It features ways nature can help us, how we in turn can help nature, plus seasonal sensory activities to maximise the benefits we get from the nature on our doorstep – whatever the weather.

"Nature helps me to understand we are part of something bigger."

Supporter on Twitter



'Since we created the new guide, the coronavirus pandemic has changed the lives of people across the globe. Recent months have shown a growing appreciation for nature among the public, and it's now more important than ever for everyone to be able to enjoy the remarkable mental health benefits of connecting with nature.'



As part of our long-term study of [Coronavirus: Mental Health in the Pandemic](#) we found that six in ten UK adults (62 per cent) who had felt stress because of

COVID-19 said going for a walk had helped them to cope – making it the most popular activity of all those listed in the survey. Meanwhile, almost half of UK adults surveyed (47 per cent) who had felt stress because of COVID-19 said that being able to visit green spaces had helped them to cope.

The guidebook aims to raise awareness and open conversations about mental health and our relationship with nature, recognising, as our study has shown, the increasingly important role that nature plays in supporting positive mental wellbeing.'

## Looking after your mental health as we come out of lockdown

For many of us, the gradual easing of lockdown brings longed-for opportunities (even if at a social distance) – to see friends, play sports, resume contact with family in 'real space' or get back to work that we value.

But for many of us, even the happy, much anticipated changes can be difficult for our mental health.

And for many others the prospect of coming out of lockdown when debate is still live about the science supporting it can be a real worry. This may especially apply to those more vulnerable to the virus and those of us with mental health concerns.

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## People shielding or more at risk

For those who are shielding, the easing of lockdown measures has been very minimal, although the Government will be reviewing the guidelines for people who are shielding at the end of June.

However, they have been advised to take extra care of themselves to minimise their risk of contracting the virus. For these groups in particular it might be difficult to see their lives returning to anything like 'normal' for a much longer time.

So where are the challenges to our mental health coming out of lockdown, and what can we do about them?

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## What are the mental health challenges, and what can we do?

We should be prepared for the fact that the end of lockdown might be as hard for us as the start was. Just as it took us time to find ways of coping during lockdown, we should also expect that it will take time to find our way back, and to reconnect with life.

**Mental health tips:** about finding routines, staying connected, eating well, and taking exercise apply just as much now as they did at the start of lockdown – arguably even more so as we remain in a period of high stress but with more demands on us.

Because our situations are unique to us, it is really important to try not to judge ourselves harshly based on what other people are doing. Everybody is facing uncertainty and challenge – and we have no choice but to move through it as best we can.

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## Fear and anxiety

Fear and anxiety are possibly the most common emotional responses any of us will feel as we approach the release from lockdown. Finding a way to pull ourselves through lockdown took a lot of our emotional energy and we may have found a place that lets us cope, and that we don't want to leave behind just yet.

Many of us fear becoming ill with the virus or passing infection on to loved ones, as the risk increases when people interact. This is an entirely normal response, but risk can be reduced by following the guidelines.

Every time we go back to something it is going to feel unusual or even scary. We might feel nervous or anxious.

That may be because we haven't done it in a while, and we've forgotten how it feels – like going to work. It might be because things have changed because of the pandemic and the routines have changed – like one-way systems and queues to enter shops.

It's important to acknowledge that these feelings are reasonable, and to expect them. It's only by building up tolerance gently that we can move through these fears.

We might feel angry or frustrated at other behaviours and feel the urge to rush to judgment or make comments on social media that reflect our anxiety. It's important to share concerns with people we trust but also to bear in mind that you can't control others' behaviours, and that commenting online can lead quite quickly to unpleasantness.

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If you can, express your frustration quickly and privately with someone you trust, and then let it go. If we hold on to things we can get pulled into rumination – where we chew over things in our heads.

For many of us, the pandemic has increased our anxiety, or made existing mental health issues worse. It may take longer to adjust to necessary changes – for example one-way systems in shops blocking off safe exit routes or wearing face masks triggering trauma flashbacks, or panic attacks because of the sensation of not being able to breathe.

If possible, take things at your own pace – but try and challenge yourself to try something different each day or every couple of days. It's very easy to allow the seclusion that was necessary in lockdown to become deliberate isolation as lockdown ends. Celebrate small wins (and big wins) and try and keep a note of what you are achieving.

For many people lockdown has been relatively quiet and isolated. Coming back into shops, traffic, transport, and work might lead to sensory overload – feeling overwhelmed by sights, sounds or smells. Headphones may be a good way to reduce some of this by helping you to focus and creating a distraction with calls, music, podcasts or audiobooks.

## Tips on coping with fear and anxiety

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### Control what can be controlled

There are a lot of things you can't control that cause you fear and anxiety – but there are some things you can manage or plan for. Having an action plan for managing things you might find difficult can help.

### Build up tolerance

Try doing something that challenges you every day, or every few days. Don't beat yourself up if it doesn't go well but keep at it. Keep a note of things you've achieved, enjoyed or surprised yourself doing.

### Vary your routines

Try and vary your routines so that you see different people and encounter different situations. If one supermarket makes you nervous, try another. If a walk at one time of the day is very busy, try mixing walks at busy times with walks at quieter times.

### Pace yourself

Recognising that you need to go at the right pace for you is important. Don't let others bully or pressure you into doing things you don't want to – but try not to let that be an excuse not to push yourself, especially when it comes to reconnecting with friends safely, outside your home, when rules allow and the time is also right for you. It can be hard to let others move forward without you – maybe your child wants to see friends or needs to return to work, but you can't. It's important to discuss concerns with those close to you, but also to allow other people space to move at their own pace.

### Talk to work

Many workplaces are allowing more flexible working even if people need to return. If you are finding it hard to get to work, or do particular shifts or activities because of anxiety or fear, speak to your manager or a colleague you trust if that feels right. If you have or have had longer term mental health problems, you may be entitled to reasonable adjustments as a disabled person under the Equality Act (2010). Even if you haven't disclosed before, if it feels safe to do so now you might be able to benefit from doing so.

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## Free Counselling from Citizen Coaching

Citizen Coaching & Counselling is offering people over 16+ who live in Birmingham with a Birmingham GP free counselling. There is presently no waiting list. Counsellors are available this week.

The popular Anger Management Online programme has also been made free for anyone to access.

Issues Citizen Coaching can focus on include relationships, bereavement, confidence building, self-esteem, depression and anxiety.

To access the counselling service call 0121 314 7075 or email [hello@citizencoaching.com](mailto:hello@citizencoaching.com) (Birmingham residents 16+ with a GP in Birmingham).

To access the free anger management visit the Citizen website [www.citizencoaching.com/amo/](http://www.citizencoaching.com/amo/)

**ANXIOUS  
WORRIED  
ISOLATED  
LOST ?  
WE CAN HELP**



Emotional Support, CBT & Counselling Online and by Telephone.

No waiting. Qualified Counsellors. Start this week

0121 314 7075 [hello@citizencoaching.com](mailto:hello@citizencoaching.com)

Every apprentice working with Creative Alliance has the right to work and learn in a safe environment, free from harm. If you have any concerns about a member of staff or co-worker, please contact Creative Alliance directly.

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