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Learn, laugh, live

Charitable Status No NI103276

Group Leaders Meeting

Keith Ineson



Listen to Keith's full talk!

Keith's presentation to the Group Leaders was recorded. If you've been feeling a bit down, he offers some excellent advice. You can find the link on the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/LisburnU3AMembers/> under Discussions.

POSITIVE NEWS FOR A CHANGE!

Since the pandemic started, we've been broadsided daily with dreadful stories, horrifying statistics and dour predictions... but there's a rainbow on the horizon! A little research reveals there are many websites and publications that focus on **positive news** and **happy stories**. Here are a few of them for you to try:

Good News and Positive Views	http://www.serve.ie/category/development-news/
World's Best News	http://worldsbestnews.tumblr.com/
Positive News: Inspiration for Change	http://positivenews.org.uk/ or https://www.positive.news/
Huffington Post Good News	http://www.huffingtonpost.com/good-news/
Daily Good	http://www.dailygood.org/
The Journal Good News	http://www.thejournal.ie/good-news/news/
Good News Network (GNN)	http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/
South Africa – The Good News	http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/
Gimundo	http://gimundo.com/
The Happy Newspaper	https://thehappynewspaper.com/
Not All News Is Bad	https://notallnewsisbad.com/
Yes Magazine	https://www.yesmagazine.org/

COPING WITH ISOLATION

It's normal to feel stress when faced with staying indoors and interacting less with people, especially when that is added to the underlying stress of worrying whether you will catch the virus.

KEEP TO A SCHEDULE

Even if you are isolated at home, try to keep to a regular schedule as much as possible. While loneliness can feel like it will never end, trying to make these days feel as "normal" as possible will help you to get through.

Start each day with a plan of a few things that you will do, keep a daily diary about how you are feeling and what you are doing

KEEP INFORMED - BUT NOT TOO MUCH!

Limit your media consumption to an extent. Watching too much news, reading too many articles, and consuming too much content can be overwhelming. Watch or listen to programmes, or choose websites, that give factual information about what you can do to stay healthy

DISTRACT YOURSELF

Another way to boost your mental health is to find healthy distractions. This might come in the form of reading, watching shows, listening to music, take a virtual tour: Many museums offer digital access to their collections or finding other activities that interest you. Play games that engage your mind such as Sudoku, crossword puzzles, solitaire.

Stay Active

We sometimes forget that our physical and mental health are linked

If you spend weeks of isolation not getting any exercise, this will have an effect on your ability to cope mentally. Below are some ideas of at-home activities that you can keep doing to stay active.

Practice [T'ai Chi](#), [Yoga](#), or at-home [low impact workouts](#) by following YouTube videos

Go for walks around your neighbourhood (or walk on a treadmill if you have one and are concerned about going outside)

Do Something Meaningful

Another contributor to feelings of loneliness can be a loss of sense of meaning. If you are finding that you feel not just bored, but also as though you are losing your sense of self, then a loss of meaning might be affecting you.

- Sign up for an online course and do a bit of work each day
- Take up a new hobby which you can do on your own
- Find your creative side - eg writing, art, redecorating, baking

Plan for the Future

While it might feel like this loneliness will last forever, there will come a time that you'll be back to your usual routines.

- Make a list of things you'd like to do in the future
- Write your Bucket list
- Set some goals for your future

Keep in touch

- Make a phone call to family, friends or to that U3A person you know but haven't seen for months
- Make use of technology if you can – WhatsApp, Zoom, social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.
- Write letters -even if you haven't done so for some time

Greysnet

<https://greysnet.com/2020/09/panic-attack-signs-and-what-to-do-if-you-have-one/>

The voice of older people online

GREYS' ANATOMY:

PANIC ATTACK SIGNS – AND WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE ONE (An excerpt – follow the link above for the full article.)

Panic attacks can come on really suddenly, and sometimes without warning. If you start to feel like you're having a panic attack, here are five things you can do to get through it:

Breathe. Breathe slowly in through your nose for a count of four, and out through your mouth for a count of four. Do this several times.

Find distractions. Count back from 3,000 by six. Pull up a webpage and count all the "Ts" on the page. Focus on a picture or painting and count the colours or shapes. It's important to get your brain really distracted.

Reassure yourself. We often just trust our thoughts, but remember, during a panic attack we are misinterpreting the world as dangerous. Talk to yourself. Tell yourself you are safe and you will be OK.

Grounding. Ground yourself into the here and now. What is the date and time? What do you notice around about you? What can you hear, smell, touch and see?

Soothe yourself. Listen to some music, suck on a candy, carry a nice smell around on a handkerchief, or keep an object with you that you can focus all of your attention on. These are especially helpful to use before you go into a situation that makes you feel anxious to help keep you feeling grounded and prevent the panic attack from happening.

If you find that you've been experiencing panic attacks for the first time, or if they're becoming more frequent, there are plenty of self-help materials you can access to help you with anxiety and panic attacks including from Get Self Help, the NHS and The Centre for Clinical Interventions.

However, if you find that you are really struggling, speak to your GP. They can refer you for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or counselling to help you manage your anxiety and panic.

Written by Dr Jenn Cooper, Lecturer in Counselling Psychology, Glasgow Caledonian University. This article is republished from The Conversation.

URGENT HELP IN A CRISIS

If you need help during a mental health crisis or emergency, NHS urgent mental health helplines provide:
24-hour advice and support - for you, your child, your parent or someone you care for
help to speak to a mental health professional
an assessment to help decide on the best course of care

Find a local NHS urgent mental health helpline:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline>

REACH OUT FOR HELP

You might find some days easier than others. If you're feeling anxious, stressed or low, try and speak to someone you trust about how you're feeling. If this isn't possible and you don't know where to turn, here are some places of support that can help you.

- [Mind](#)
- [NHS 111](#)
- [Every Mind Matters](#)
- [Samaritans](#)

SOME OTHER USEFUL SITES:

- <https://www.csustan.edu/counseling/theme-of-the-month>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-tips/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>
- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/coronavirus-anxiety.htm>