

You can only change what you can change: Corona virus and Young People

You are being asked to to wash your hands, not touch your face, stay home, and keep at least 2 metres from people if you go out to exercise. This is being asked of you even though most young people will be fine. By doing it you will save lives, and contribute something to society that is really meaningful.

1). All change: You'll be well aware that schools is out!

But unlike the usual end of term, this isn't planned.

It's very much unexpected.

And at a time when there's lots of scary news around about infections, viruses and people having to stay at home.

Pandemics and bad things happening in other countries- and what will happen here. It can feel uncertain and scary.

2). You may have very different reactions – maybe you think:

Great! I get out of exams - no more work!

Or perhaps - Oh NO! I've worked so hard and don't know what's going to happen about my exams/university – or my next steps?

Or maybe - Oh no - I'm going to miss my friends- I don't even have all their contact details!

Or perhaps you didn't do as well in your prelims/mocks and have been working hard since and feel you've lost the chance to get a good grade?

After that initial reaction you might be starting to think more about the things you've lost/going to be hard.

What you're going to do at home?

How to keep in touch with friends?

3). What are you going to do at home?

This is like the long summer holidays- but you need to plan school into it.

a). First, Structure your day e.g. by:

Aiming for a regular time to get up - and start the day at the same time as school.

Mixing the *should* stuff and the *good* stuff.

- E.g. school/work in the morning.
- Then fun things in the afternoon.
- Don't forget at least 10 minutes for PE each day.

Plan in some time with friends as well- more on that later.

b). Be aware there may be more stress around than usual with your parents.

Why is this a good idea?

Turning day into night means that you never see anyone and you might feel more anxious at night.

Why is this a good idea?

Exercise releases your happy hormones and makes you more tired at night when your body wants to sleep.

What can you do to help?

You can help by not adding additional expense,

Have your parents been forced off work/job suspended or even lost their job?

They may have extra worries about your grandparents or work or money.

Remember- you can only change things you can change.

Things like your parents' job/mortgages and their money you can't sort out. But the government has promised it is going to offer financial help/Mortgage holidays etc.

c). How to keep in touch with key relatives- e.g. brothers/sisters at University/away, and grandparents.

You may not be able to visit older relatives, or those with certain illnesses for a time.

They will miss you, so plan regular chats (set up a social media group so that you can all share funny things).

4). Keep positive

a). Keep in touch with friends.

Think about:

Games that work online - chess, monopoly, X-Box, Playstation, etc - or make a tik tok.

What about things you could do over skype like monopoly, a quiz, jokes etc.?

Missing those evening get togethers? Have an online party - skype- share play lists - have a dance off ...

BUT don't forget that social media is forever - don't put up content that you don't want to be seen by everyone.

Also get out during the day- walk together- kick a football, go for a run, walk up a hill- just keep the 2 metre rule.

b). Keep active

c). Use the opportunity of more time.

Read those books, manga, or comics that you have been meaning to.

Take up a hobby, learn to paint or sew or play the guitar, and maybe become the next big star.

Discover something new - have a group chat with your friends and share ideas. Want to learn HTML or Python- now's the time.

What about thinking about young people all over the world - learn about what they are doing and how they are coping.

d). Help someone else- a great way of feeling good yourself.

Anyone local is lonely?

Need a dog walking etc

Setting up a street What's app group for if anymore needs extra help.

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5). How are you going to replace some of the important things you were looking forward to?

Delay the leaving prom or graduation ball from Primary or secondary- and plan a reunion instead once you are all able to get back together.

That way you'll use that smart dress, tie, jacket you've bought.

6). What about the future?

If you're not in an exam year this year, you're probably not that worried. Things will settle down and you'll get back to school online or in person over the next weeks and months.

Some of you in final year at school might be in the attractive position of having an Unconditional offer.

But for some of you this year might have key stage exams. Now SQA, GCSE's, A levels or Highers have been cancelled your plans seem up in the air.

Here's that important point again- you can only control what you can control.

The professional people setting exams need to set up a system to sort this out. The pressure is on them to do that.

They have said no-one will be disadvantaged by these changes

Don't throw in the towel and say it doesn't matter. Life will go on and get back to normal at some point. Use the time wisely to work on skills that will really help. If you plan to take music next year, get ahead on your practice.

You can use social media to learn online, - it's the same with languages. BBC bitesize has loads of ways to prepare - and it's fantastic for universities to see that you used the time to your advantage.

If you were expecting to go to University or College or wherever, that all should still happen.

It sounds like a mix of old and newer coursework, mocks and teacher recommendations may all be parts of your assessment.

But you can't affect much of that now. Things in the past are done. So change the bits you can control. Work hard and focus on course work and assignments.

If you're someone who was planning to peak for the exams, work hard now and try and peak for any further lessons and course work now.

Hold onto that statement that no-one will be disadvantaged by what's happened.

Universities and Colleges will need people to attend as usual, and anyone who would usually go to University is likely still to be there.

7). What about coronavirus:

Again, control what you can.

Stay 2 metres away from people.

Wash your hands- using warm water and soap for 20 seconds, every time you go out and come home.

Remember your home is your sterile safe zone. Don't bring bugs in.

Wash your hands after opening the post and discarding the envelope.

Wash your hands and mouth/nose and face.

Protect your lungs- bin smoking/pot or anything else than can

affect them.

Don't listen to the news too much- the media love a catastrophe. There's loads of good stuff going on in the world. Pay attention more to that.

And add to it yourself – be someone that contributes good.

If you want quality information, try to stick to sites you can trust if you want information, like the NHS and World Health Organisation.

Beware, there is fake news everywhere.

Remember, you can put up with anything if you know it won't last forever.

There will be hassles- but also good times- and a chance to slow down and take stock of what you do- and who you are. After times of adversity, people often look back at times of hardship and remember the sense of community.

That's not a waste of time.

Here's something else you can do.

Worried? Stressed? Fed up? Angry?

Living Life to the Full for Young people is aimed at people attending secondary school. It contains three courses:

- Core course of key modules covering understanding why you feel as you do, changing upsetting thinking, and doing things that make you feel better.
- Optional modules- lots of topics from dealing with irritability and anger, building confidence, and asking for what you need (assertiveness).

It contains modules, books to read online, and interactive worksheets you can complete on your phone.

Like many things, you may need to work at it to get the most from the course. Are you up for a challenge?

- You Time modules- short five minutes of fun or relaxation to help you feel better quickly.

The course is usually subscription-only but has been made free for any users for a two week period ending Monday 6th April.

An alternative is www.lltff.com for your parents/guardian's or anyone older than 16 (free courses).

Other resources: Book version from www.lltff.com/shop.

