

# COPING WITH ANXIETY & STRESS

At this difficult time, it's completely normal to feel anxiety, stress, worry, fear, low moods, loneliness, helplessness, frustration, guilt, or anger.

Inside this leaflet you will find tips on how to manage these emotions.

THE MALDON CORONAVIRUS  
RESPONSE HELPLINE  
01621 851997

## Are you finding it difficult to cope?

It's normal to feel stressed, anxious or low in mood



**Mid Essex  
Health in Mind**

### Talking therapies can help you to ...

boost wellbeing

find a sense of purpose

improve sleep

manage stressful situations

manage worry

learn coping techniques

relax

**Health in Mind offers a range of innovative digital, video and telephone based talking therapies**

**Self refer online to our free NHS service without seeing your GP by visiting:**

**[www.northessexiapt.nhs.uk/mid-essex](http://www.northessexiapt.nhs.uk/mid-essex)**



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# ABOUT STRESS

If stress goes on for too long a response called 'autostress' can arise which can be harmful. Signs of 'autostress' include:

- chest tightness and feeling like you can't breathe
- muscle tension
- aches and pains
- headaches,
- difficulty sleeping
- restlessness
- heart palpitations, and
- digestive issues

Anxiety can happen in response to stress, or on its own.

# ABOUT ANXIETY

Anxiety is best described as unhelpful thinking patterns that we can experience when we fixate on threat, uncertainty and negativity.

Examples of anxiety to look out for are:

- frequently checking your body for coronavirus symptoms
- obsessively checking the news for coronavirus updates
- your chest feels tight and you tell yourself that you have coronavirus
- you imagine losing all the people you love
- "I'm following all the guidelines, but what if I spread the virus?"
- "What if someone gets too close to me at the supermarket and I catch it?"
- "I feel scared, so I must be in danger."
- "I'm going to be stuck inside for months on end."
- "My mental health will keep deteriorating and I'll have to go back on meds."

**Whilst you can't stop yourself from becoming anxious, you can help to manage it.**

# FOCUS ON AREAS OF YOUR LIFE THAT YOU CAN CONTROL

**Information consumption:** Your stress and anxiety levels can be reduced and managed by controlling the type and amount of information you look at, or listen to, on a daily basis. Bear in mind that most news sources are negatively biased, sensationalist and speculative in order to win your attention.

Focus on the key Corona Virus facts:

- The vast majority of people only experience relatively mild symptoms
- Coronavirus is fatal in about 2 – 3% of cases
- The Maldon District's number of Corona Virus cases is low compared to elsewhere in Essex

Look at trusted sources, no more than once daily, such as:

- GOV.UK
- BBC News
- NHS.uk

Also focus on good news stories such as communities pulling together to help each other through the pandemic. In Essex on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram organisations such as United in Kind, People of Essex, Essex Map and The Essex Chronicle are sharing personal and community good news stories.



**Challenge your thoughts:** Identify those unhelpful thoughts that are making you anxious and actively challenge and discard them. Additional support from trained counsellors via Health in Mind is available. [www.northessexiapt.nhs.uk](http://www.northessexiapt.nhs.uk)

**Distraction:** Carry out activities to stop any spiralling thoughts. Colouring, listening to music, planning meals, yoga, giving yourself a manicure, learning a new skill such as calligraphy, playing games, watching comedy, keeping a journal or blog etc. Find something that works for you.



**Increase your activity levels:** Exercising for just 20 minutes 3 times a week will reduce your low mood and increase your energy levels. Why not consider walking, yoga or online workouts? Motivation will follow!

**Plan your time:** A structure can help maintain your wellbeing. Set yourself realistic weekly goals, with smaller daily tasks that you can tick off along the way. Make sure that you also take regular breaks and have end-of-day rituals. It can also be helpful to create family 'traditions' such as games or movie night.



**Belly breathe:** Inhale gently and lightly, slowly counting to 4 whilst expanding your belly, holding that breath for a count of 2, and then slowly exhaling through your mouth for a count of 6. It works best if you practise daily for 5-10 minutes.

**Keep socially active:** Keep in touch with your friends and family through letter writing, telephone or online such as video chats or playing online games like scrabble etc. Keeping in touch benefits all parties. If this isn't an option then try contacting Essex Befriends, a telephone befriending service. They can connect you with a volunteer who will telephone you regularly for a chat. Often both you and the volunteer form long-lasting friendships. More information: **0300 770 1263**.

# USEFUL CONTACTS

PLEASE CONTACT DIRECTLY

**ACTION FOR FAMILY CARERS:** Services and support for unpaid carers of all ages across Essex. **0300 770 8090**

**“CHURCHES TOGETHER IN MALDON” CHAPLAINCY:**

Whether you are a person with a Christian faith, other faith or none – we are here for you. Contact us via **01621 851997**

**COMMUNITY AGENTS:** Information and support – either by phone, via email, or on your doorstep with social distancing observed. **0300 303 9988** – ask for referral to Community Agents.

**DENGIE FOOD BANK:** Every Wednesday 10am – 12noon at United Reformed Church, North Street, Southminster, CM0 7DF

**ESSEX BEFRIENDS:** Working together to reduce loneliness and isolation by connecting people. **0300 770 1263**

**ESSEX WELLBEING SERVICE:** Linking all Essex residents with the practical, emotional & social care support . **0300 303 9988** or [www.essexwellbeingsservice.co.uk](http://www.essexwellbeingsservice.co.uk)

**HEARING HELP ESSEX:** Information, emotional and practical support for people with hearing loss. **01245 496347**,  
EMAIL [info@hearinghelpessex.org.uk](mailto:info@hearinghelpessex.org.uk) or TEXT **07950 406 173**

**HOMESTART ESSEX:** Expert support for families with young children through challenging times. **01245 847410**  
[www.home-startessex.org.uk/downloadable-resources](http://www.home-startessex.org.uk/downloadable-resources)

**IAPT:** Providing access to a wide range of talking therapy treatments for adults with common mental health problems. **01376 308704**

**MALDON CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU:** Information and advice on benefit entitlements, finding services, managing money and more. **01621 875774** – leave a message and an advisor will call you back.

**MALDON FAMILY HUB:** Warm and friendly centre for families. Helping parents and carers to have access to services and networks which will empower and help them support their family. **0300 247 0014**

**MALDON FOOD BANK:** Help with food and other household items.  
Wednesdays 10am–3pm at Elim Church, Wantz Road, Maldon CM9 5DB

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**MALDON JOB CLUB:** Support available in getting interview ready,  
including CV writing and interview skills. **07443 397 893**

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**MOAT FOUNDATION:** Supporting communities via local projects and  
activities including digital support. **Nicky Plumb 07711 438 513.**  
EMAIL [nicky.plumb@moat.co.uk](mailto:nicky.plumb@moat.co.uk)

## WELLBEING COURSES

**MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING:** an internationally recognised and accredited online training course delivered fully qualified MHFA instructors giving you the knowledge, skills and understanding to identify symptoms and support yourself and others experiencing mental health problems as well as the 5 steps of mental health first aid.

Four day course – participants must attend all sessions.

**Dates for 2021:** Thursdays – 21st, 28th January & 4th, 11th February

**Times:** Sessions 1 & 3 10am – 3pm

Sessions 2 & 4 10am – 1pm including breaks

**Venue:** ZOOM – you will receive an invite once registered

**Charge:** £35 to cover materials (manual, workbook, certificate and action card) plus postage.

Alternatively, a one-day session is available dependent on demand.

Please call **01621 851997** for more information.

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**MANAGING YOUR WELLBEING WORKSHOPS:** A planned 2 hour workshop on managing your wellbeing to help you identify your concerns during the COVID pandemic and develop strategies to cope with them, so building your personal resilience. Four sections include a 60 minute session discussing your COVID related anxieties and coping strategies with an accredited MHFA trainer and a 30 minute relaxation session.

Dates and locations across the District are still to be advised but if you are interested in attending one of these sessions then please contact Maldon and District CVS to be kept informed on **01621 851891**.

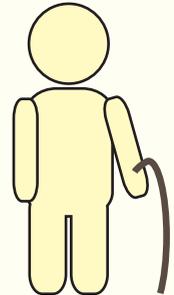
# STAYING IN TOUCH: getting online



Think about whether you or your family would benefit from online services such as getting your repeat prescriptions, learning about video-calling with family, or finding local businesses that can deliver. If you would like a friendly digital buddy volunteer to help you go through what you would like to do, please call the helpline on **01621 851997**.

In partnership with the MOAT Foundation, Maldon and District CVS are hosting online meet-ups, family sessions and coffee mornings – everyone is welcome and we can provide help over the phone to connect. Call the helpline to find out more. **01621 851997**.

# GOING OUT: take the first step with a buddy walker



Unsure about going out? Then a buddy walker volunteer can help. A buddy walker will come to your door and accompany you on a socially distanced walk at your own pace for up to half an hour. They can go with you to the local shops, to get a fish and chip supper, or simply take a turn around your garden so that you can get used to being out and about in company. All buddy walkers respect social distancing, have face coverings and follow good hygiene practices. To find out more please call the helpline on **01621 851997**.

