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Editorial

Dear Reader

We bring you this special edition Health & Wellbeing Newsletter in extraordinary times. Across all departments in our hospital and across all families and communities we are adjusting to new practices for work, for leisure and for social interaction and it's tough but we are resilient, we will come through this and we will have better days.

With a focus on self-care and adjusting to our current circumstance, particularly working in a healthcare setting, together with and supported by senior management we wanted to bring you some information and tips to support your wellbeing as a valued member of the Saint John of God Hospital team. With that in mind we have been working with our colleagues in Psychology, Occupational Therapy and Mental Health First Aid to develop resources to share with you and those will be unveiled in the coming days. We begin by launching our social media campaign *Take A Moment* see page 3. For some light relief in our Recommended Reading section see page 4.

We are delighted also to share with you here some tips for self-care during the Covid-19 pandemic expertly and thoughtfully developed by Jessica McKnight who recently joined the hospital Psychology team. Also in this issue, on page 2, we have included a list of resources you might like to share with those charged with amusing young children through this challenging time - no mean feat! We include also below some links that may provide useful information for you, or someone that you know, in coping with some of the more difficult outcomes of this most difficult time.

Wishing you and yours good health, good humour and good days ahead,

Tracey & Niamh



Mental Health Ireland has shared five simple actions we can all take to protect our mental health and maintain positive wellbeing during uncertain and challenging times. Check out their article, watch the videos, and share the tips sheets at <https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/get-support/covid19/>

Get the facts. Be **DRINKAWARE** 

Visit [drinkaware.ie](https://www.drinkaware.ie)

As we adjust to our temporary new normal of remote working, physical distancing and constantly evolving updates about Covid-19, now more than ever, we all need to be more mindful of how much alcohol we are drinking, the impact this may be having on our mental and physical wellbeing, and explore our sober curious. Drink Aware Hub offers information and practical advice on alcohol and mental health, drinking at home, your immune system, working remotely, sleep and links to support at <https://www.drinkaware.ie/facts/alcohol-and-covid19-coronavirus>



It is good to know that the Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) are working tirelessly to keep the Irish public, as informed and supported as possible in matters relating to end-of-life and bereavement care in these exceptional times. The provision of reliable and up-to-date information to the general public and to healthcare professionals is vital.

With many years of experience, IHF are responding with compassion, and a great depth of expertise, to your needs and that of your family and community at this critical time. As Ireland's only national charity dedicated to death, dying and bereavement, IHF have developed a Care & Inform hub to respond to the COVID-19 emergency in an informative and compassionate way. You can visit the Hub at:

<https://hospicefoundation.ie/new-online-hub-launched-to-support-those-facing-death-and-grief-during-covid-19/>

Self-care During Covid-19

by Jessica McKnight

The presence of a pandemic such as the one we are currently experiencing, gives rise to certain existential fears in people- loss of control, social isolation and death. Lack of human connection, loss of freedom and the uncertain and dynamic nature of COVID-19 are related issues which can have a significant impact on one's mental health.

While quarantine and self-isolation are being implemented as a public health measure, we should be cognizant to the possible negative psychological impacts of these procedures, and put procedures in place to minimize the severity of them.

Top Tips

Social media can act as a medium to maintain a semblance of social contact, but it can also be the source of scaremongering.

- ★ By filtering your feed on social media, you can ensure that you are ingesting information from reputable sources only, and being censored from information being emitted from unreliable sources.
- ★ Try to limit the time you spend checking social media. Allow yourself specific times throughout the day to check in, but try to avoid mindless browsing of news alerts and social media notifications regarding COVID-19 throughout the day.

This is a time where **self-care tools** should be utilized most.

- ★ Several mindfulness, meditation and yoga apps have made their services free for the coming weeks, while we are in this critical stage. Making time in your day to slow down, breathe and step away from media alerts can give perspective and promote feelings of calmness, even briefly. These tools are particularly important for those working in healthcare. Stress levels and risk of burnout increase at times like these, so by incorporating elements of self-care into your day, we can increase resilience and improve our ability to cope.

Reduction of boredom is essential during this time.

- ★ Try to maintain a structure to your day and adhere to your usual sleeping routine. Set aside time to perform specific tasks throughout the day, whether it's catching up on work, watching a TV show, cooking a nice meal- by avoiding long periods of time where you have no plan, you can reduce feelings of restlessness, anxiety, frustration or conflict with others.

Avoiding complete isolation should be ensured. While we may not be able to physically have social contact with others, we can enhance the ways we connect with our friends and loved ones in other ways. This may prevent feelings of loneliness and promote feelings of closeness- that although we are physically separated; we are in complete solidarity in our efforts to overcome the infection.

- ★ Employing the use of social media, making phone calls or organising video chats over Skype are all ways to remind us that we are not alone.

Altruism, humanity and kindness are human characteristics that we manifest daily in our work at St. John of God Hospital, and are important traits to remember at a time like this.

- ★ Caring for others, especially those who are vulnerable and immunocompromised is encouraged where possible, without compromising your own health or the health of your loved ones and ensuring you are not over-exerting yourself.
- ★ Whether you check in on relatives by phone or pick up groceries for neighbours, small acts of kindness can alleviate feelings of stress or anxiety and promote feelings of closeness to others.
- ★ Acting as a 'we' not an 'I' during COVID-19, where we recognise the impacts of our behaviour and attitude on others and co-operate with government guidelines, will ensure that we 'flatten the curve' sooner rather than later.

Online Resources for Wellbeing

For those caring for children, Covid 19 has brought the added stress of home schooling, keeping the kids occupied in the home but also trying to keep them safe both physically from the virus but also mentally. The huge lifestyle change has had an impact on everyone's lives so trying to explain it to children can be difficult, trying to alleviate their concerns can be testing and trying to be positive and upbeat can be hard! So we have put together a little list of resources that may provide a little help or distraction for the young people in your life. Most of them are free of charge while the schools are closed.



Audible are offering free audio books for children. A lovely way for them to get lost in a story at <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>



Twinkl

is a wonderful site full of teaching ideas and resources that many teachers use, printable worksheets and quizzes too at <https://www.twinkl.ie/>



Topmarks is a great site for primary school children to help them learn to count and do maths with the use of interactive games, making learning fun at <https://www.topmarks.co.uk/>

Another activity children enjoy, some do it in school, is **Yoga**. A wonderful gentle exercise and it is available in a child friendly form on Youtube called Cosmic Kids. They are 20-30 minutes classes with different themes such as Frozen, Harry Potter or Disco Yoga! at <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>



To get the kids involved in **Arts & Crafts** using your household recycling waste check out Arty Marty on Youtube, Martina is very talented and creates some lovely projects with the kids at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCf0KCrRuXIDKu1iV3xwnfuA>



To get the kids baking look up **The Bunnery** on Facebook, a lady in Kells sharing tasty recipes every day that she cooks alongside her children at @TheBunneryKells



For any animal lovers the kids can check out the animals in Dublin Zoo on their webcams at <https://www.dublinzoo.ie/animals/animal-webcams/>



@sjogmentalhealth



@SJOGMHealth



In times of stress and uncertainty it is essential for our wellbeing to take time for self-care . We encourage you therefore to **Take a Moment** throughout your day to prioritise your own needs. Keep an eye on our social media platforms in the coming days where we will share tips from colleagues on how you can **Take A Moment** for yourself

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/saint-john-of-god-hospital>

 Saint John of God Hospital
 #takeamoment

Do you need to do anything for your own self-care?





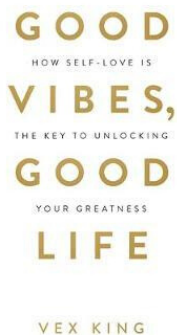
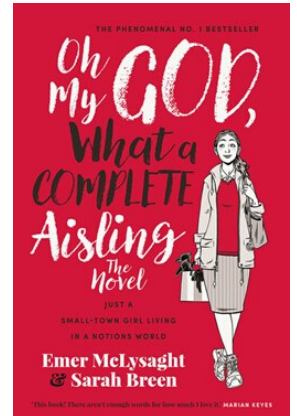


Recommended Reading



Emer McLysaght and Sarah Breen, the creators of the much-loved Aisling character and the popular Facebook page 'Oh My God, What a Complete Aisling', bring Aisling to life in their novel about the quintessential country girl in the big smoke.

Aisling is twenty-eight and she's a complete ... Aisling. She lives at home in Ballygobbard (or Ballygobbackwards, as some gas tickets call it) with her parents and commutes to her good job at PensionsPlus in Dublin. Newly single and relocated to the big city, life is about to change utterly for this wonderful, strong, surprising and funny girl. This is the first in a series of 3, light hearted and laugh out loud worthy! For a little light relief why not give it a try?



In this book, guru Vex King will show you that when you change the way you think, feel, speak and act, you begin to change the world. Vex overcame adversity to become a source of hope for thousands of people, and now draws from his personal experience and his intuitive wisdom to inspire you to:

- practise self-care, overcome toxic energy & prioritize your wellbeing
- cultivate positive lifestyle habits, including mindfulness & meditation
- change your beliefs to invite great opportunities into your life
- manifest your goals using tried-and-tested techniques
- overcome fear and flow with the Universe

A little inspiration might be a good thing right now...

THIS TOO, SHALL PASS.

When things are bad, remember:
It won't always be this way.
Take one day at a time.

When things are good, remember:
It won't always be this way.
Enjoy every great moment.