

Coronavirus: Mental health help and alternatives to A&E during the outbreak

During the coronavirus outbreak, Surrey and North East Hampshire's mental health services are raising awareness of several services available to those seeking mental health help at home or considering going to A&E for help with a mental health crisis.

Access talking therapies from home

Talking therapies support people with common mild to moderate mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression. They offer a range of treatments, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which explore and change how people think about their lives, and aim to reduce unhelpful patterns of behaviour.

Mind Matters, the talking therapy service provided by Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, is open to adults aged 18 and over registered with a Surrey GP.

During the Coronavirus outbreak, the Mind Matters is offering psychological support sessions by telephone, online chat or video call via Skype. Refer yourself online at www.mindmattersnhs.co.uk or by calling the team on 0300 330 545.

Free online course on 'Coping during the pandemic'

A free to online course entitled "Coping during the Pandemic" has been created by the Trust's Recovery College which runs short courses to equip people with skills to help them better manage their own mental health.

While face to face sessions are on hold for the time being, online courses can be accessed via www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk.

Crisis mental health support

Services for people in mental health crisis are continuing to operate throughout the outbreak.

Call the Mental Health Crisis Helpline: 0800 915 4644

(Accessibility: Textphone 18001 0800 915 4644 or SMS Text 07717 989024)

The Mental Health Crisis Helpline supports adults (over 18) and their carers in Surrey and North East Hampshire who are experiencing a mental health crisis. Calls are free and lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Visit www.sabp.nhs.uk/help for more information.

Visit a Mental Health Safe Haven

People seeking same day face-to-face support are urged to visit their evening and weekend Safe Haven drop-in, where possible, rather than A&E.

There are five Safe Havens across Surrey and North East Hampshire: Aldershot, Epsom, Guildford, Redhill and Woking which are open to adults (aged over 18) and their carers experiencing a mental health crisis.

During the coronavirus outbreak, Safe Havens are open as usual: every evening: 6pm – 11pm (Aldershot opens from 12.30pm on weekends and bank holidays).

Staff are observing the government advice around hand hygiene and the social distancing at all times. However to help reduce the spread of the virus and help prioritise care to the most vulnerable they are no longer holding sessions solely for wellbeing support.

Visit www.sabp.nhs.uk/safehaven for more information, including location information.

Children and young people

CYP Havens offer a safe place for 10-18 year olds to talk about their worries and mental health in a confidential, friendly and supportive environment. CYP havens are located in Guildford, Epsom, Staines and Redhill. While these locations are temporarily closed at this time, a virtual service is operating over the phone, every weekday from 4pm - 8.30pm and from 12pm - 6pm on the weekend. Young people can call: 07773 008435 during these times; the number will not be available outside of those times and may be subject to change. For the latest information, please visit: <https://www.cyphaven.net/>

Children and young people can also access support online through a guided self-help confidential counselling service provided by our partner Kooth. Kooth is an emotional and mental well-being community where young people can seek help anonymously. Kooth offer one-to-one text based counselling, therapeutic messaging; as well as peer-to-peer support through moderated forums and articles. Visit www.kooth.com to access this service.

Staying mentally well when staying at home: tips and advice

“At this challenging time, while we all have to focus on protecting ourselves physically, we should also think about what we can do to look after our mental health. Unrelenting and worrying news coverage about coronavirus can be testing for everyone and having to self-isolate for a long period of time can also be stressful but there are some steps we can all take to look after our mental wellbeing during this time and beyond” said Dan Brown, Clinical Lead at Mind Matters.

He also gave the following tips and advice for staying well at home:

- Limit the amount of time spent watching, reading or listening to news about Coronavirus, which can be upsetting
- Social media can help you to stay in touch with people but worrying stories can feed anxieties so take a break or limit your exposure to this platform
- Stay connected to family and friends using email, video chats, text and telephone
- Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines, eat well-balanced meals and don't drink too much alcohol

Keeping active

- Find ways to spend your time: learn something new, get on top of admin or contact people you have been meaning to catch up with
- Build physical activity in to your daily routine, if possible, such as cleaning your home, dancing to music, going up and down stairs
- Try to get as much fresh air and sunlight as possible even if that just means keeping windows open
- Practice mindfulness: Paying attention to the present moment can improve your mental wellbeing. Go to: www.nhs.uk/mindfulness
- Listen to the mental wellbeing audio guides provided by the NHS to help boost your mood, at: www.nhs.uk/mental-wellbeing-audio-guides