

Date: 07/04/2020

From: East Sussex Mental Health Joint Commissioning Team

Subject: Mental Wellbeing and Mental Health during the Coronavirus outbreak - Guide and links to resources for local communities.

Important notice: All information supplied is for guidance only. It is important to emphasise that people should only direct individuals to available guidance or services. It is the sole responsibility of the individual to follow that advice. Any advice given is in good faith and communication is not intended to be a formal assessment or treatment.

Introduction

Promoting positive mental wellbeing for all vulnerable people who are social distancing is not specialist and is everybody's business. This paper covers simple tips and questions that can be asked when regarding mental wellbeing and links to general support. Mostly people will be anxious or worried about a particular thing or have cumulative issues that will reduce if the issue is dealt with.

The paper highlights where people can go for further support for their mental health and how to access that. This will only require advice such as contacting local voluntary community services, their GP or how to refer themselves to primary care mental health support in East Sussex 'Health in Mind'.

It also covers how to advise people who may disclose that they have a significant or diagnosed mental health problem and direct them to access telephone support from local voluntary community services, or link with their GP, current mental health practitioner or teams.

Guidance for general mental health and wellbeing advice

Q – *It is important to ask people about their general mental wellbeing. However, expect during this unprecedented time that many people will report they are feeling anxiety with low mood.*

A - Reassure them that this is perfectly normal. Not only will people be worried about the virus, they will be socially isolated, worried and anxious about food and supplies, perhaps have strained relationships during lock-down, they may have issues with employment, housing or finances?

Q - *Ask them to proactively think about what they can do?*

A - Support them to think about a course of action. If their concerns are quite general, you can direct them to relevant general resources so they can take time to self-select the best advice and guidance for themselves individually. Further reinforce to them that these issues and level of worry for the general public are normal. It is important that you reassure them this is temporary.

Q – *Is there a specific problem affecting their mental wellbeing?*

A - While you are talking to someone their issue may become obvious or you may be able to ask them directly what could help, and direct them to specific service for advice or guidance to support that (e.g. housing advice).

Q - *If they are still anxious or worried, ask if they would like resources and advice that can help them tackle and improve mental wellbeing?*

A - There are several online mental wellbeing resources that you can direct them to proactively keep on top of their mental wellbeing with tips and advice on how to cope while staying at home.

- Government - [Guidance Mental Health and Wellbeing \(Covid-19\)](#)¹
 - NHS - [Mental wellbeing while staying at home](#)²
 - Mental health Foundation - [Mental Health during the Coronavirus outbreak](#)³
 - Mind - [Coronavirus and your wellbeing](#)⁴
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Guidance for further mental health support

Most issues with mental wellbeing can be dealt with proactively by the individual if they get access to good advice and guidance. However sometimes people may request a need for further support for common mental health problems. If this happens, they should always be advised to see their GP. Combined with that, they can also look at Primary Care mental health services [Health in Mind](#)⁵ website or talk to local [Southdown Wellbeing Centres](#)⁶.

There is also an East Sussex Mental Health Directory with information about a wide range of free services available to local people. [East Sussex Mental Health Directory](#)⁷

Q - *When does someone need support for common mental health problems?*

A - Please do not attempt to assess people's needs for further support. Simply ask if they would be interested in finding out about further support.

Q - *What should I advise if they say they are interested (or need) more support?*

A - The advice is they should always contact their GP. There can also be directed to web based and telephone services in East Sussex [Health in Mind](#)⁵ 3rd Sector [Southdown Wellbeing Centres](#)⁶ or [East Sussex Mental Health Directory](#)⁷

Q - *What kind of support is available in East Sussex?*

A - East Sussex has a Mental Health Directory listing available services. This will be kept updated every day through the Corona crisis. There are a variety of services available free and many can be accessed via self-referral. [East Sussex Mental Health Directory](#)⁷

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¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

² <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>

³ <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

⁴ <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse06a84>

⁵ <https://www.healthinmind.org.uk/>

⁶ <https://www.southdown.org/how-we-help/mental-health-recovery/wellbeing-centres-east-sussex-community-network>

⁷ <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/socialcare/healthadvice/mental-health/directory/services/>

Guidance if someone needs specialist Mental Health support

Specialist services (known as Secondary Care services) are available for people with severe mental health problems. They are provided by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT) and Adult Social Care. They will generally have a mental health diagnosis and be known to local Mental Health teams or ASC teams. These will be generally individuals that are living independently in the community.

There are links and web pages set up to support these individuals for support and individuals should be directed to them.

Q – *Ask if the person has used services before?*

A – If they know how to contact their relevant team or care manager direct them to do this and discuss their situation with someone.

Q – *What if they can't remember their care manager or team's details?*

A - If they have a care plan and crisis card from Sussex Partnership mental health services, these will include details of who they should contact in a crisis. If they can't find their care plan, they can contact their [community team](#)⁸ during the day – 9am to 5pm – from Monday to Friday and ask for Duty.

The [Sussex Mental Health Line](#)⁹ is there to offer support and point them in the right direction about where to get help should they need it.

For ASC ask them to contact [Health and Social Care Connect](#)¹⁰ and ask for the relevant mental health team details.

Q – *What do I do if someone tells me they are in crisis?*

A - If they feel there is an immediate risk of harm – either to themselves or someone else – then they should:

- Phone 999 or ask the person to go to the nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) department.
- [Conquest Hospital](#) – The Ridge, St Leonards-on-Sea, TN37 7RD
- [Eastbourne DGH](#) – Kings Drive, Eastbourne, BN21 2UD

There is more information available regarding accessing mental health services in East Sussex on [East Sussex Mental Health Directory](#)⁷ or contact [Southdown Staying Well Space](#)¹¹ if they feel they are approaching a mental health crisis.

⁸ <https://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/service-adult-community-mental-health-teams>

⁹ <https://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/sussex-mental-healthline>

¹⁰ <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/socialcare/getting-help-from-us/contact-adult-social-care/>

¹¹ <https://www.southdown.org/how-we-help/mental-health-recovery/staying-well-space-east-sussex-community-network>

For suicide prevention

Q – *In some very rare situations people you are in contact may tell you they feel suicidal.*

A – It is important to get them to talk to someone immediately (friends, family or a professional) and if they feel they are at risk to themselves they should go to A&E immediately. Below are contact details.

Samaritans, if you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, the Samaritans can offer help and support 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Phone 116 123 or visit the [Samaritans website](#)¹²

Call the emergency services, if you are concerned about an immediate risk of harm – either to yourself or someone else – then: Phone 999

Go to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) department. In some hospitals, this will be called the Emergency Department. There are staff on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week, who will be able to assess you and give you the appropriate help.

- Conquest Hospital – The Ridge, St Leonards-on-Sea, TN37 7RD
- Eastbourne DGH – Kings Drive, Eastbourne, BN21 2UD

The Sussex Mental Health Line⁹ is there to offer support and point you in the right direction about where to get help should you need it: 0300 5000 101 (limited service available).

If you are not sure, ask them to call 111. You can phone 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is a service that makes it easier to access local NHS healthcare services. It's a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time.

Other suicide prevention service Sussex Partnership NHS Trust Urgent Help Advice and links to web support:

- website: [Urgent help in a crisis](#)¹³
- website: [Stay Alive App](#)¹⁴

Grassroots Suicide Prevention, work with communities, organisations, services and individuals to help them to become ready, willing and able to effectively support someone at risk of suicide. [Grassroots Suicide Prevention](#)¹⁵

¹² <https://www.samaritans.org/>

¹³ <https://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/urgent-help-crisis>

¹⁴ <https://www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk/suicide-prevention>

¹⁵ <https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/>