

Looking after your MENTAL HEALTH

COPING WITH LOCKDOWN: – TIPS FROM A COUNSELLOR

Now the lockdown has been going on for some time we asked Stafford-based counsellor, Julie Tanner, ([On With My Life](#)) for her tips on coping with the current situation. Her advice follows:

STAND, Pop your bubble and Laugh – 7 tips for your emotional wellness during lockdown

1. **S**hower and stretch your muscles.

Get showered and dress in comfortable clothes, brush your teeth. Put on bright colours if you have them, or a favourite perfume/aftershave or item clothing or jewellery. It's amazing how dress affects our mood. Then stretch your muscles. This may be exercise or something simpler and gentler - anything that releases the tension in your muscles will help your circulation, detoxify and energise you. Google 'Progressive Muscle Relaxation' and find an exercise that you like – and do it daily.

2. **T**ake your medications.

Because of lockdown, you may be experiencing small or big changes to your daily routine which makes it easy to forget to take your medications. If you're on medication of any sort, or even just daily vitamins, this should be an absolute priority at this time. Make a new rule so you don't forget. It is also crucial you do not take more than the dose recommended or prescribed by your doctor. It's important especially right now not to use alcohol or other substances to try and cope.

3. **A**cept yourself and others.

Lower your expectations of yourself and those around you. None of us are at our best right now. Accept yourself without question or blame during these hard times. You cannot fail at lockdown – there is no roadmap, we are all doing the best we can in an incredibly challenging time. Focus on getting through one hour and one day at a time.

4. **N**estle.

A safe space from others and to ourselves is essential for our emotional wellbeing – especially when we may not be getting the physical and psychological space we normally get. Find somewhere in your home where you can retreat to. Make it cosy with cushions and blankets. Ask not to be disturbed and spend at least 20 minutes a day here – and be mindfully present to a sound or a song; a sensory feeling; something you see. This is equally important if you live alone.

5. **D**rink in water, daylight and fresh air.

Even if it's just 2 pints of water a day, 20 minutes outside in daylight or sitting by a bright, open window, this is a fast and effective way to lift your mood and spirit. Then...

6. **Pop your bubble.**

Reach out to a human outside your home every day using your preferred way of contacting – telephone call, text or e-mail. And if you find yourself in crisis there are many helplines out there with people to talk to – see the signposting section overleaf.



And, finally, if you can...

7. **Laugh.**

There may not seem much to laugh about right now, but try to give yourself permission to have a laugh or a little fun each day. It may be playing games with your friends or family online or pet or watching funny clips on YouTube, TikTok etc. Laughter can be a powerful antidote to the seriousness of the world just now.

If you need any support, the follow services may be useful:

Staffordshire Mental Health Helpline

Call free on 0808 800 2234 or text 07860 022821, Mon to Fri 7pm-2am; Sat/Sun 2pm-2am.
brighter-futures.org.uk/staffordshire-mental-health-helpline/

Drugs & Alcohol

If you are struggling with drugs and/or alcohol, call the Stafford support service on 01785 270080 for adults, 01785 241393 for young people under 20.

Starfish Health & Wellbeing in Stafford

If you are over 16 and suffering emotionally, call 01785 243 002 for a referral into the service.
starfishhealthandwellbeing.co.uk

Andy's Man Club Stafford

A group for men, so they have a safe place to discuss anything on their minds – every Monday at 7pm (not Bank Hols) at Stafford Rugby Club.



Andys Man Club Stafford

Stafford Bereavement & Loss Service

Local charity offering support to people who are experiencing grief. Call 01785 273768 for help.
staffordbereavementsupport.org.uk

Staffordshire Women's Aid

Free and confidential support for victims of domestic or sexual violence/abuse. Call the 24hr Helpline on 0300 330 5959.
staffordshirewomensaid.org

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