



**National FRC
Mental Health
Promotion Project**

GUIDELINES TO SUPPORT YOU AS YOU WORK REMOTELY

As we are settling into our new routines away from the office, the National Family Resource Centre Mental Health Promotion Project has set out some key considerations you can incorporate into working from home that will support your productivity and wellbeing. Working from home can be challenging, each one of us as a unique household set up. These are only guidelines, some may not be possible and that's okay too.

Work Environment:

Find a space away from the main living area if possible, where you can focus on your work. Try if you can to not work from your bedroom. Associating work where you sleep is not advised as it can hard to separate work then from relaxation. If you can work from a well-ventilated room with a window it will help you focus.

Work Station and Screen Time:

Working from home can mean you don't have the ideal set up you are used to. Make sure you have a supportive chair and take regular breaks away from the screen. Apply the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. That will give your eye muscles a rest. Try to blink regularly. Focusing on a screen could make you blink less, which may make your eyes tired and uncomfortable. Don't sit too close to your screen. Keep it in a position that is slightly tilted away from you (College of Optometrists).

Minimise Distractions:

When we are focused on one thing, we produce a higher quality of work. Move your phone away and remove all apps that cause distraction. Work mode can now be enabled on many smart phones, set this in the morning and your day will be much more productive. Minimising distractions can be easier said than done, other family members may need your help in the home, so don't be too hard on yourself. Just do your best.

Regular breaks:

Every 25 minutes get up and stretch out, go outside and get some fresh air. Get active and move, being sedentary is not good for the body and mind. The more you move the better you feel. Pencil breaks into your daily routine.

Exercise:

As much as you can get outdoors and go for a walk, find some form of exercise that you enjoy and embrace it. By finding something you love, you will remove the belief that exercise is a chore. Exercise is the key to both physical and mental wellbeing, it releases endorphins which improves mood and can reduce stress.

HEALTHY WORKING AT HOME

Routine:

Set a routine for your day, do this the night before. Make a list of what you need to do and schedule your day. Prioritising tasks will lead to a more productive, fulfilling day. Make sure to schedule in time for yourself. Work your regular hours and make sure to switch off at the end of the day.

Keep in contact:

Reach out and keep in contact with those you care for and those you usually work with. Keeping camaraderie during challenging times can help you through it. Use technology such as Skype to see how people really are.

Support as a Manager/Coordinator:

Working from home requires trust and open communication. Establish whether you need to check hours and reporting. Decide between you and your staff the level of support they may require and the expectations for the new working set up. Having these outlined from the beginning ensures a smooth transition into the new way of working. Managers/coordinators don't be too task focused, ask someone how they are feeling and really listen to them. Challenging times can lead to uncertainty, increased anxiety and stress. All staff are humans after all and are just as susceptible to these feelings and emotions. Everyone has a role to play to ensure each member of staff feels supported through these difficult times.

Nutrition:

What we eat can play a vital role in how we feel. Try opting for nutritious healthy foods when working from home. These foods can help concentration and will boost your immune system. Batch cooking can help alleviate stress around meal times and can save time so you can spend more of it looking after yourself and taking time out.

Self-care tips and strategies

The following are some techniques and activities that can help to reduce stress.

Breathing techniques

The breath can be our best friend, it can help to ground and support us when we feel stressed, anxious or troubled.

- Stop, feel your breath and just be
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth
- Visualise smelling the flower and blowing out the candle
- Finger breathing- start at your thumb and trace each finger. As you go up, you breathe in, and as you trace down, we breathe out



Mindfulness activities

- Go outside and notice five things that are beautiful around you
- Go for a mindful walk
- Feel the cool breeze on your face or the heat from the sun on your face
- Listen and talk mindfully
- Eat mindfully
- Try some mindful colouring



A mindful breathing exercise:

Place your two feet on the ground. Make sure you are sitting in a comfortable position.

When you are ready:

- Take a deep breath in through your nose, pushing your belly out as you inhale.
- Breathe out through your mouth, dropping your shoulders as you exhale.
- Take another deep breath in through your nose, pushing your belly out as you inhale.
- Breathe out through your mouth, dropping your shoulders as you exhale.
- Take another deep breath in through your nose, pushing your belly out as you inhale.
- Breathe out through your mouth, dropping your shoulders as you exhale.





JOURNALING

- Journaling can help to reduce stress and anxiety.
- Try five-minute journaling in the morning, where you write three specific things to be grateful for
- Write, draw or doodle about whatever you want
- Set goals – What would you like to know more about?



GRATITUDE

Gratitude comes when we observe the beauty in our lives

- Make a gratitude list



BOOKS ON SELF-CARE

- Eating Mindfully. Susan Albers, 2003
- Mindfulness: A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world. Mark G. Williams and Dr. Danny Penman, 2011
- Self-Compassion. The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself. Kristin Neff, PH.D., 2011
- The Happiness Trap: Stop Struggling, Start Living. Russ Harris, 2008
- The Little Book of Mindfulness: 10 minutes a day to less stress, more peace. Dr. Patrizia Collard, 2014
- The Little Book of Self-Care: 200 Ways to Refresh, Restore, and Rejuvenate. Adams Media, 2017
- Wherever you Go, There you Are. Jon Kabat Zinn, Hyperion, 1995



APPS FOR YOUR SELF-CARE

- Calm. Guided practices for meditation and sleep.
- Headspace. Guided meditations and mindfulness practices.
- Insight Timer. The app features guided meditations, music and talks.
- Mindfulness Association. Guided practices include mindfulness, compassion and insight practices and audio files
- Shine - Self-Care & Meditation. The app features affirmations & meditations

If you require some additional support please contact the following:

The Samaritans are available 24/7 for free support by phone or email.

☎ 116 123

✉ jo@samaritans.ie

Aware are operating their freephone support line, email support and online Life Skills programme.

☎ 1800 804 848 (7 days a week from 10 AM - 10 PM)

✉ supportmail@aware.ie

Pieta have 24/7 freephone supports and text support services.

☎ 1800 247 247

text HELP to 51444

turn2me.org offer peer support, online support groups and professional therapeutic support, free of charge.

💻 <https://tinyurl.com/svkew9o>

Bodywhys offer email and online support groups

✉ alex@bodywhys.ie

💻 <https://tinyurl.com/wd86ssb>

GROW is providing support groups online, where face-to-face groups are not available.

💻 <https://tinyurl.com/r58xdjm>

MyMind are providing counselling and psychotherapy both online and by phone.

💻 <https://tinyurl.com/w3lqlcb>

☎ 076 680 1060

www.yourmentalhealth.ie : HSE website which has supports and advice on how to support your mental wellbeing.

Project Contacts:

Programme Manager: Shauna Diamond Email: support@frcmentalhealthpromotion.ie

Training Support: Grace Mc Gee Email: training@frcmentalhealthpromotion.ie

