

## Looking after your mental health

Your mental health and wellbeing is always important, especially during these challenging times.

Here are tips for how you can look after your mental health.

- The first step is to recognise that things are becoming too much for us and acknowledge it.
- Notice small changes in your thoughts, behaviours, emotions e.g. are you feeling overwhelmed by tasks that you usually wouldn't think twice at, more irritable than usual, are you apprehensive about going out of the house or talking to others? Sometimes it helps to keep a diary of how you feel.
- Often, we feel better after we've talked it through with someone, whether it's with friends or family.
- Accept that it's normal to have sad or anxious thoughts, it doesn't necessarily mean you are mentally unwell.
- Practice good self-care by looking after yourself, being kind to yourself and giving yourself a break – give yourself permission to rest.
- Getting active increases serotonin and dopamine whilst decreasing adrenaline and cortisol, which increase during times of stress.
- A good night's sleep makes our brains more alert, helps our memory and boosts our metabolism.
- Set short-term goals and celebrate the success of achieving those.
- Practice gratitude – be grateful for the positive things in your life and what you've achieved.
- Seek help if you need it and appreciate the value of your network.
- Remember, feelings of stress, anxiety and worry are normal reactions to a very difficult time in our lives.