



Student
Dietitians

Managing your mental health during Covid-19: A Student Guide

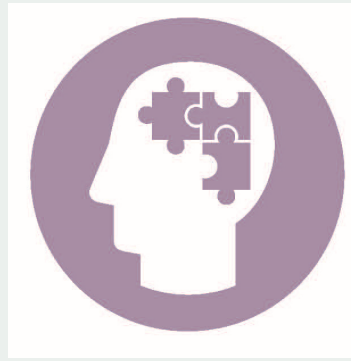
“

The BDA is a great community and I can find out about what's going on in the dietetic world. I think membership is vital for good practice and networking.

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BDA Full Member

ABOUT THE MENTAL HEALTH DIETITIAN SPECIALIST GROUP



The BDA Mental Health group supports dietitians working in all areas of mental health, including adult mental health, older people's mental health, forensics, learning disabilities, children and adolescent mental health, eating disorders and autism. We also support a number of regional interest groups in these areas.

WHAT WE DO:

Lead the profession - our members are consulted for their views on all relevant NICE guidelines and the activity of the Clinical Reference Groups within the field of mental health and eating disorders. As a group we work to develop training to enhance the skills of the dietetic workforce. Within our membership we have a number of media spokespeople who continually work to promote the profession. Support our members - we have a website that is packed with resources and provides a networking opportunity for our members to contact other dietitians working in the field, either for peer support, sharing resources or for problem solving. We are currently in the process of developing resources that have been produced following consultation with dietitians nationally, to support our members in practice. These are free to all our members.

BUILD FOR THE FUTURE:

We have undertaken a scoping exercise of the dietetic mental health workforce to influence commissioners and to develop services. We are also developing fact sheets to promote the dietetic profession and the work of dietitians within the field of mental health.

SUPPORT FOR DIETETIC STUDENTS TO MANAGE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID19!



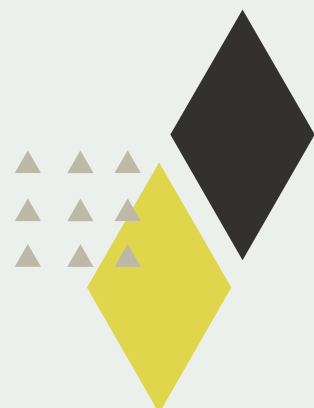
Hi Guys!!

My name is Eimear Menton and I'm a qualified Mental Health Nurse since 2015, which I worked full time in both the Republic of Ireland's Health Service Executive and Scotland's NHS Lothian services. I am currently undertaking a full-time Masters in Dietetics at Leeds Beckett University, a member of the British Dietetic Association and the Student Officer for the BDA's Specialist Group for Mental Health Dietitians

On behalf of the British Dietetic Association Mental Health Specialist Group, we have composed this information booklet to support students during this time, focusing on tips to cope and managing positive mental health and support anyone who may be finding this time very challenging.

Keep safe,

Eimear.





TOP TIPS FOR MAINTAINING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

SLEEP

Sleep is vital for both our physical and mental health. With increased anxiety, stress, lack of routine and reduced physical activity this can be difficult. We are currently experiencing uncertainty as students, but try to maintain your usual routine where possible, ensuring you take time to rest.

BEFORE BED:

Try keep away from your phone and screens,
Try get some fresh air and physical activity to help promote tiredness early in the day but avoid strenuous activity too close to going to bed,
Listen to some relaxing music,
Do yoga/pilates,
Listen to guided meditation,
Have a bath.

EAT WELL

It can be difficult to eat well when our mental health is affected. Ensure you aren't eating to deal with your emotions and use some of the other coping strategies we recommend to deal with your stress and anxiety. However, don't be so strict on yourself! Attempt to stick to your usual mealtime routine and fuel your brain and body with adequate nutritious foods to fuel your studies and extra activities.



KEEP ACTIVE

The recommendation is for 150 minutes modern intensity physical activity per week or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise per week. Follow the most up to date advice and Government guidelines for social distancing. Don't worry if you are not able to complete your usual routine, the idea is to just keep moving where possible. Activities such as following an online workout, yoga or even cleaning around the house counts! Try using your daily opportunity to leave the house for exercise to get your physical activity in! Getting active and moving will boost your confidence, distract you from negative thinking and assist you in coping with day-to-day life or uni work due.

KEEP IN CONTACT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

This is so important at this time, especially those who are alone or vulnerable. Perhaps video call where possible, especially those who are self-isolating alone as they may not get to see anyone during this time.

If not regular phone calls are great to reduce the feeling of isolation. The use of applications has increased which has made group video calls more accessible and can be great fun.

DO SOMETHING KIND FOR A NEIGHBOUR

Assist old/vulnerable members of your society. Whether it's offering to collect their medication or do some food shopping, why not try help someone else. Being kind is vital and now's the time we need to all help each other.

The below websites have some information on how you can volunteer:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/forms/volunteering-enquiry/>

<https://volunteering.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/volunteering>

KEEP A JOURNAL

Many people find this very therapeutic. If you feel you are struggling with moving home, having limited freedom and only engaging with your family (which many students find difficult after living away for so long), try express high emotions through writing in a diary. The uncertainty of placements, university assessments and financial pressures are real life stresses and you are allowed to feel these emotions.

Ensure that you can express them in a more controlled way.



YOUR FOOD AND YOU!

MINDFUL EATING

This concept involves being present and, in the moment, when it comes to mealtimes. We have so much more time on our hands so taking time to create and enjoy food is vital at this time. Ensuring that you're not too hard on yourself is also important. This website describes mindful eating: <https://www.headspace.com/mindfulness/mindful-eating>

ANY CONCERNS WITH DISORDERED EATING OR EATING DISORDERS

If you or someone you know is struggling with this now, make sure you check out the list of resources and support we have below. Ensure there is a fully supported environment and that you have the knowledge and resources to deal with this.

SHOPPING AS INFREQUENTLY AS POSSIBLE IS KEY

Use tinned foods,

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Cook in bulk and freeze foods,

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Wash, chop and prepare frozen food

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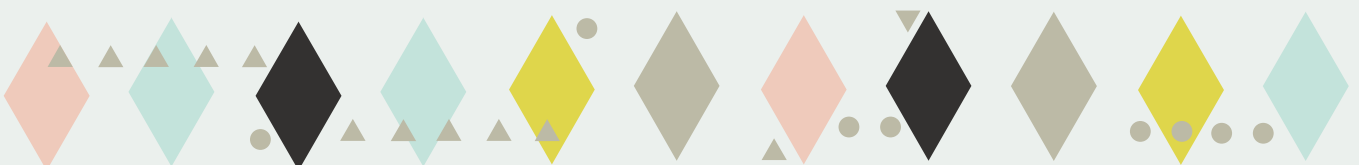
Make a list before shopping

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Get creative with different recipes to use up leftovers

ENJOY YOUR FOOD!

Why not make a real effort with one meal a week and have a different theme? Try bringing excitement and enjoyment into your home through your passion for food. Whether it's cooking for the whole family or just yourself, have fun with creating a new dish by picking a theme every week. Also, by doing this at the weekend, it can bring back some kind of routine to break it up from the week!



HOW TO SPEND YOUR DAY?

DO SOME UNIVERSITY WORK

Try stick with your usual routine and keep a diary if you need to have a set structure on how to complete work. Over the summer, make sure you remain in contact with lecturers and fellow students.

Companies being closed may mean there is less work available, but this will change so take time to spruce up your C.V and do some extra reading or online courses for university. Avail of any learning opportunities. Don't put severe pressure on yourself, make sure you take time out to relax too!

COOK

This is a great way of getting up and moving around a kitchen. Read on to find some advice on cooking and some links on where to get new recipes.

ART

So, you don't have to be the next greatest artist but art in any form is known to be extremely therapeutic by distracting you from negative thoughts, the fulfillment of doing something you enjoy and is a mindful activity to enjoy. Perhaps you have a piece of furniture that's dull and dreary, why not up-style it and give it a whole new lease of life.

LISTEN TO MUSIC

Whether it's Spotify, the radio or YouTube, have music on as sometimes listening to the news can have too negative affects on our mental health as continuously hearing bad news can be deflating.

LISTEN TO A PODCAST

Use this opportunity to learn/ educate yourself in an area you have. There is a list below for three Dietitian podcasts, but there are lots to choose from, so keep an eye out! It's nice to keep learning but take a break from the laptop and books!

DECORATE/TIDY/RENOVATE

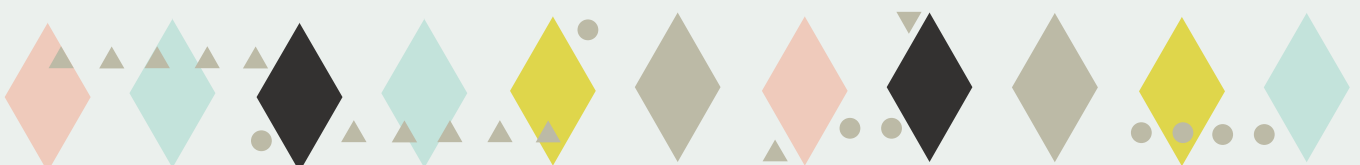
Why not take this time to rejuvenate your closet, bedroom or other room in the house. It can be fun to get creative and if it is something you've wanted to do for ages but haven't had the time. Clear out your wardrobe of those clothes you haven't worn.

EXERCISE

Whether you're doing your WOD (workout of the day), a daily run, yoga or so on; do what you enjoy. It will clear your head and keep your body healthy.

GARDENING

If you're lucky enough to have a garden or any form of green space, why not try something new growing flowers, fruit or vegetables. People who love gardening find it therapeutic and rewarding when produce starts to grow. Even if you have minimal space, you could use pots to grow herbs or small flowers.



ONLINE & SOCIAL MEDIA

It can have both pro's and cons at this time. Use it Wisely!!

PROS:

Use social media to follow professionals within the healthcare field. We have enclosed a non-exhaustive list of some of our favourite professionals with regards to physical and mental health.

Why not use this time to promote safe health message on your social media platforms by sharing professional and evidence-based resources provided by organisations?

Use this time to engage in any online training or webinars

CONS:

Social Media has a bad reputation but used correctly it can be beneficial.

Reduce time on social media: Constantly having alerts, notifications and scrolling through negative news can become a mindless, negative and draining daily routine.

Only take information from specialists within the area with regards to your physical and mental health. Social media is full of information from people who don't have the qualifications, so be careful with your choices.





PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DURING COVID19

SOME LINKS ARE :

THE WHO -

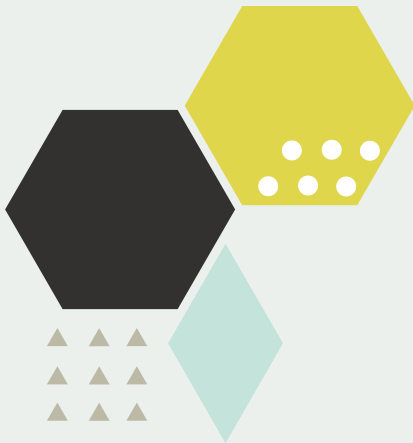
<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-technical-guidance/stay-physically-active-during-self-quarantine>

SPORT ENGLAND -

<https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout>

NHS -

[https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/free-fitness-ideas/?tabname=how-much-exercise.](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/free-fitness-ideas/?tabname=how-much-exercise)



GET ACTIVE.... IN THE KITCHEN!

Whether it involves teaching a family member, trying a new recipe or having some fun baking some treats, why not get active in the kitchen. Moving around the kitchen is enjoyable, counts as physical activity, distracts from negative thoughts, and can broaden your skills for clinical placements. It is a chance to get creative and try a variety of multicultural recipes to broaden your cultural and ethnic knowledge.

HERE ARE SOME LINKS TO WEBSITES THAT YOU OR YOUR CLIENT CAN USE:

*Jack Monroe (how to shop on a budget) - <https://cookingonabootstrap.com/>
BBC Good Food - <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/>*

Diabetes UK - <https://www.diabetes.co.uk/recipes/>

Coeliac UK - <https://www.coeliac.org.uk/information-and-support/your-gluten-free-hub/home-of-gluten-free-recipes/>

British Heart Foundation - <https://www.bhf.org.uk/search/all?keyword=recipes>

Why not
Try a
new recipe?





HOW DO I OR SOMEONE I NEED GET SPECIALIST HELP?

Depending on the presenting level of risk, the individual may only require talk therapies. There is a list of these and online resources further on to avail of support over the phone or online.

Due to COVID-19, you must be aware that referrals can be slowed down due to a change in services, staffing and resources. If you have already tried the online services, you should contact 111 and then your GP.

Children's services are called Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the adult services are for over 18 years old. For adults over 65, they have a specific service also.

The teams are made up of both inpatient and outpatient services with a large multidisciplinary team. The team includes us; the dietitians alongside consultant psychiatrists, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists.

In the case of a crisis, you should ring 999.



HERE ARE SOME ORGANISATIONS THAT SUPPORT POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

BRITISH DIETETIC ASSOCIATION - [HTTPS://WWW.BDA.UK.COM/](https://www.bda.uk.com/)

They will provide you with nutrition and dietary advice and support you throughout your time as a student. The first year of membership is free and they provide education, training and resources for students and dietitians

SAMARITANS - [WWW.SAMARITANS.ORG](http://www.samaritans.org)

If you are feeling low in mood, hopeless and anxious. They have a variety of platforms on their website to engage with them.

BEAT SUPPORT – [HTTPS://WWW.BEATEATINGDISORDERS.ORG.UK/](https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/)

They are providing excellent specialist support and advice on their social media and their website for individuals who are dealing with an Eating Disorder during a Pandemic and all year around. They provide information for supporting others with Eating Disorders also such as friends and family members.

GOV.UK - [HTTPS://WWW.GOV.UK/GOVERNMENT/PUBLICATIONS/COVID-19-GUIDANCE-FOR-THE-PUBLIC-ON-MENTAL-HEALTH-AND-WELLBEING](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing)

They are providing specific advice on supporting your mental and physical health during the Covid 19 pandemic.

MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION – [HTTPS://WWW.MENTALHEALTH.ORG.UK/](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/)

They are the UK's leading charity for mental health. With prevention at the heart of what they do, aiming to find and address the sources of mental health problems so that people and communities can thrive.



MIND UK – WWW.MIND.ORG.UK

Provide support for those dealing with mental health issues. They currently have online and telephone services providing support but do have centres all around the UK.

STUDENT MINDS – WWW.STUDENTMINDS.ORG.UK

Support specialist advice for students who require support for their mental health.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS - [HTTPS://WWW.ALCOHOLICS-ANONYMOUS.ORG.UK/](https://WWW.ALCOHOLICS-ANONYMOUS.ORG.UK/)

AA provides support individuals who may have an issue or concern for someone who has a challenging relationship with alcohol.

RETHINK MENTAL ILLNESS - [HTTPS://WWW.RETHINK.ORG/](https://WWW.RETHINK.ORG/)

They aim to ensure equality, rights, the fair treatment and maximum quality of life for all those affected by mental illness, their carers, families and friends.

They also wish to transform at every level the way the nation approaches mental illness. Every year, their diverse range of information and support helps people get through crises, live independently and feel that they do not have to face mental illness alone.

YOUR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS UNION –

They can direct you to services such as counselling and extra academic support to make this time less stressful and support your anxieties around course work.



SOME POPULAR ACCOUNTS TO FOLLOW ON INSTAGRAM

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

Joe Wicks: @thebodycoach
Derval O'Rourke: @dervalo.rourke
James Smith: @jamessmithpt
Taylor Ryan: @the_sportsdietitian

DIETITIANS:

British Dietitians
Association: @bda_dietitians
BDA's Specialist Groups
include: @mental_health_dietitians
@bda_olderpeople
@bda_maternalandfertility
@dsg_bda
@bdaoncology

Sarah Elder - @SarahElderNutrition

Student Dietitian Alison Booker: @the_food_student - For lots of tips and
tricks for student Dietitians

Rosemary Huntriss: @DietitianRo

Tara Kelly: @TaraKellyRD

Maeve Hannan: @dieteticallyspeaking

Nichola Ludlam-Raine: @nicnutrition

Charlie Watson: @therunnerbeans

DOCTORS:

Peter Foley: @DrPeterFoley

Hazel Wallace: @TheFoodMedic

Alex George: @DrAlexGeorge

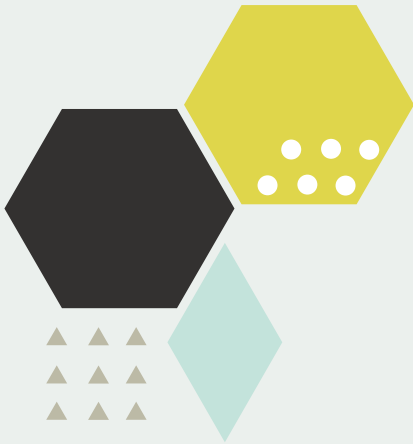
Ciara Kelly: @theirishbalance



ADVICE FOR PLACEMENTS:

- Keep in contact with lecturers,
- Email the Trust Dietetic Department that you're due to visit to introduce yourself and ask relevant questions you may have,
- Contact using email over the telephone at present; Be aware that Dietitians are also under pressure at present so this allows them time to reply,
- Keep an eye on the Trust's website so you can see their most up to date information and advice,
- Do some extra training or ensure your online training is up to date.
- Make yourself aware of the Trust's services that they offer to help you manage your stress, anxiety, or other concerns.





If you wish to contact the Mental Health Dietitian Group or request to join, you may contact us at the following:

Facebook:

@dietitiansmhsg

Twitter:

@Dietitians_MHG

Instagram:

@mental_health_dietitians

Website:

<https://www.bda.uk.com/specialist-groups-and-branches/mental-health-specialist-group.h>





<https://www.bda.uk.com/>