

## Missing People's guide on *How to take care of others*

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on people's mental wellbeing with many feeling scared, anxious, and uncertain of what their future may hold. Many have been forced to leave jobs they love, been trapped inside for extended periods and seen family and friends fall ill, or even pass away.

At Missing People, we have seen the impact the pandemic has had on people's mental health first-hand. In summer 2020, 24% of people reported missing were considered high risk compared to only 15% in 2019. Many people are feeling isolated or alone due to the restrictions and feel they have nowhere to turn.

At the moment, it is more important than ever that we look after each other and reach out to those who need it. It is horrible to see someone you love struggle, especially if you do not know how to help them.

This guide will share advice on how best to take care of others and to look out for those close to you.

*In a new survey conducted by Missing People of people at risk of going missing, and those who have disappeared, 67% of respondents said their mental health was worse because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and 50% said their ability to access support services was worse.*

## How to take care of others

*With COVID restrictions still in place, it is more important than ever that we look out for each other. With the days still quite gloomy and cold, we may notice people we love suffering and want to help them. It can be hard to know how to help people when they are going through a difficult time, but our Services Team have offered the following tips to support you, as you support others.*

### Ask how people are

Observe and notice what's going on for people and if someone seems upset or not quite themselves, sincerely ask how they are.

### Listen

Listening is the most important thing you can do to help someone in crisis. Don't interrupt and hear the person without judgement. Offering a safe space to talk freely will help the person feel respected and truly 'heard'. Knowing that you care and that they are not alone, may just be what they need.

### Check-in with friends and family

Create and schedule a time to check-in with people you are worried about. Make sure to be consistent so that they know you are there for them. Throughout lockdown, many people saw their support networks breakdown so now is the time to be pro-active and rebuild these networks.

### Educate yourself

Be aware of the strategies and resources that are available. This way if someone reaches out to you, you can point them in the right direction for help. Luckily, there is a lot of information available for free online. The charity [Mind](#) and the [NHS](#) both provide practical advice for a range of issues related to mental health.

### Help out

If someone you know is stressed or overwhelmed, help them out. Offer to take a few tasks off their hands and give them a break. This does not have to be a grand gesture even the smallest thing may take a weight off their shoulders.

### Brighten up their day

Send a random card or bunch of flowers to a loved one. Perhaps they are feeling the winter blues or maybe they have had a tough week at work. Random acts of kindness are a great way to show someone that you care and that you are thinking of them.

### Take care of your own mental health

It can be tempting to put your own mental wellbeing aside and prioritise helping your loved ones. However, be careful not to take too much on and make sure you are putting yourself first this winter. Our services team have also offered their best tips for [taking care of your mental health here](#).