missing people

Missing People's guide

Taking care of your mental health

The issues of mental health and missing are undeniably linked- up to 8 in every 10 missing adults suffer from diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health issues.

As a result, it is imperative now more than ever that you take care of your mental wellbeing. An increasing number of those who are getting in touch with our Services team cite financial difficulty or instability as a contributing factor, and as such, people may be finding it even more difficult to take care of their mental health due to the rise in cost of living, and other difficulties they are currently experiencing.

Our frontline Services team have offered the following tips to help you prioritise and look after your mental health.

116 000
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How to look after your mental health

Stay in the 'now'
Mindfulness is not for everybody but if it works for you, use it.
Don't think long-term, focus instead on the very short-term, day by day or hour by hour. Anxiety lives in the gap between the present and the future. Stay in the present. It's all you have.
Cry and vent if and when you need to. It's allowed.

Establish a support network
Reach out to your family and friends and agree who you can reach out to for support and in what circumstances.
Open the conversation with those you seek to be part of your support network so that you can both set your boundaries.
Sharing, caring, and honest communication are key to creating a solid support network.

Manage your relationship with social media
Social media can raise anxiety and negatively impact sleep so try setting timers for how long you spend on your accounts.
Make sure that you remain in control when using social media.
If you start feeling stressed or comparing yourself to others, try taking a break and see how you feel afterwards. If you have a missing loved one, you will want to check for updates, but consider having a friend that you trust to manage this for you instead.

Manage your relationship with the news
Much like with social media, the news can be a great source of anxiety for many people. This year more than ever, you may find yourself checking the news frequently for updates about the pandemic but feeling more stressed as a result.
Try limiting how often you check the news and turn alerts off on your phone.

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How to look after your mental health

Keep moving
Along with trying to get outside every day, exercise does your mental health a world of good. Even a short walk can help clear your mind and leave you feeling calmer. Try and do just one thing a day that elevates your heart rate. Your body and mind will thank you!

Just because "It could be worse", it doesn't mean it shouldn't be better
When we all know so many people are facing struggles with their health or financial security it is easy to brush off things we are going through, or think it's not right to talk or complain about what is going on. There is no limit to how many people can be feeling in a bad place, so don't squash your worries and feelings down.
Find the space to talk about what's going on.

Put yourself first
It is OK to put yourself and your mental wellbeing first.
For many, this is difficult to do and can lead to feelings of guilt or feeling like you are being selfish. Take some time for yourself and figure out what is best for you right now. You will be surprised by how many people will empathise and support you.

Don't be afraid to speak to your GP
If you're not sure if you need medical support or not, have a chat with your GP rather than staying in doubt.

Get support
If nothing else seems to be helping or you feel you have nowhere to turn, reach out for support. Our free, confidential helpline, on 116 000, is here for anyone affected by a disappearance or thinking of leaving home. Other agencies that can help are Samaritans, SANEline, CALM, SHOUT and Papyrus HOPELINEUK

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