Blast Advice

Positive distractions

As more restrictions are put in place to keep people safe during the coronavirus crisis, we know many people are finding this challenging.

Having a good bank of distractions that work for you is helpful during this time. You may find it useful to use the BLAST technique, which aims to address the emotion behind the urges that you might be feeling and try to overcome that emotion in a positive way rather than using unhealthy behaviours. Think about what kind of things help you to feel better when you're **B**ored, **L**onely, **A**ngry, **S**tressed or **T**ired – then when you feel the urge to use behaviours, you can try to identify the emotions that might be causing it and look for positive distractions from that feeling.

We've given a few ideas below. These may not be things that work for you, or tips we've suggested as responses to one emotion might work better for you in response to a different emotion. The best way to distract yourself will vary from person to person, so think about what you would find most helpful.

Bored

- Think about a change of scenery. Now, the government is recommending social distancing, but you can still leave your house to walk around, especially in open spaces. If leaving isn't an option or there's nowhere nearby you can go, you could move to a different room, or even think about rearranging your space.
- Call someone you know and ask them how their day is going. Maybe they'll have an interesting story to share, or perhaps they're bored too, and a good chat will be helpful for both of you.
- Read/watch a film or show/play a video game/listen to a podcast. What works best for you? You might find it helpful to try something completely new, or, if boredom makes it difficult for you to follow along with new things, perhaps having a list of old favourites to rely on could be useful.

Lonely

- Get in touch with a friend or family member. Remember, the current situation isn't going to last forever – perhaps you could talk about plans for things you could do in the future. If you're regularly feeling isolated, think about asking someone to check in with you each day, or do things like eating meals together over video chat – this could help you keep on top of meal plans as well.
- Make a list of music/podcasts/radio stations/films/TV shows you enjoy. Sometimes silence can make loneliness worse and having something on even as background noise can help.

Angry

- Is the anger caused by a person or situation that you can easily identify? If so, there may be ways you can productively address it – could you tell the person how you're feeling? Are there ways you or someone else could change the situation?
- Ask someone you trust if they'd mind you sharing your frustrations. We all need a bit of a vent every now and then! If there's no one you want to talk to, maybe writing down your feelings could help.
- Try doing something that requires concentration – you could watch a film in a language you don't speak with the subtitles on, reorganise some part of your living space, or do some crafting.

Stressed

- Think about ways you might be able to change the thing that is causing you stress – taking a short walk if you're stressed by feeling trapped indoors, for example, or picking a small area to tidy if your living space is messy.
- Try meditation, affirmations, or breathing exercises – there are apps that you can use to help you do this, or perhaps you could ask someone you trust to talk you through an exercise so that it feels more personal and tailored to you.
- Consider what activities you find absorbing – something repetitive, like knitting? Something where you can let your feelings out, like journaling? Something transporting, like a good book. The most calming activity will be different for everybody, so have a list ready to go for when things start to become stressful.

Tired

- Lie down and rest when you're able to, even if you can't sleep. You could use white noise, a podcast, or soothing music to help you switch off.
- Read a book, or even ask someone if they'd mind reading to you. Something familiar that you don't have to focus too hard on may be helpful, or, alternatively, something a bit dull that you can start to tune out.
- Now, you might find yourself getting more tired because routines are being thrown off due to social distancing. Try to keep a routine with your sleeping as far as you can – if you can get up and go to bed at regular times it's less likely that you'll feel tired during the day.