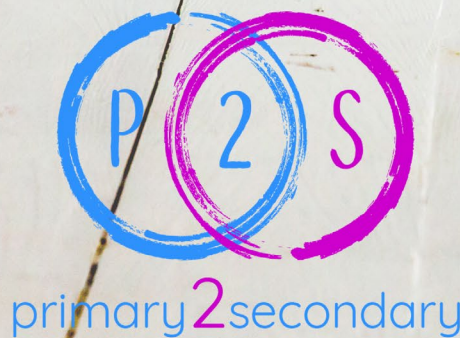


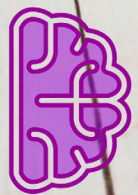
I've Got This!

KEEPING SAFE & STRONG
IN UNEXPECTED TIMES

Sue Atkins
The Parenting Expert



Aiding
Mental
Health



Hi there!

Sometimes things happen REALLY fast don't they? Like a cheetah chasing a rabbit, us eating chocolate cake – or a virus stopping us doing lots of things that we're used to.

Coronavirus has turned our world a bit topsy-turvy – and if it's made you feel a bit topsy-turvy too, well that's quite normal. There's so much going on, so much has changed.

It feels a bit weird for most of us and it's important that we don't let it upset us too much. When things we know, things we're used to CHANGE A LOT it can be really tricky. But if we know how to handle it and know what to do to help us feel OK – well , that's a really good thing.

We've put a few things together for you here - there's some information for you and also lots of activities for you to do. The activities will help you by giving you ways to look at what you might be thinking and feeling. By giving you some ideas of how you can make the most of your time and help yourself to feel positive, happy and ready for the future.

We hope you enjoy doing this. We want you to have fun and feel safe and feel strong.

YOU'VE GOT THIS!

Love from
Sue and Jo

Then & Now

Think back to a little while ago and what you were doing, then look at now. Lots of things have changed, haven't they? Use the columns below to write down a few things comparing THEN & NOW.

For example, "I could meet my friends..." "I have to call/video call them..."

Then...

Now...

There have been lots of changes. Some of them you might not be very happy about, some you might find quite upsetting, some you might actually prefer! What we have to remember is that **this is temporary**. However long it might last (we don't really know yet) – things WILL change, and this won't be forever.

Looking Forward

Think about some things that you are looking forward to doing again when this situation has passed. Write them in the box.

Now think about some **new** things that you'd like to do in the future and write them here.

One great thing to come out of all of this is that we can really appreciate some of the things that we used to like doing, but can't do right now. It should help to make us enjoy them so much more when we're able to again.

It might make us want to do lots more new things in the future too. There's so much to look forward to!

What can I control?

We are living through something very unusual, something that we weren't ready for. Sometimes that might make us feel a little powerless – like we don't have a choice about what's happening to us. That can sometimes cause us to worry or feel some difficult emotions – like angry or sad.

Think about what's happening in your life now and write some of them down, thinking about the columns you put them in – are they things that you can OR can't control? There are some examples already made for you on the next page, but you don't have to use them. What other things could you put into the columns?

Things I can control...	Things I can't control...

How long this is going to last.	Making plans for the future.	Staying inside and keeping safe.
Getting fed up.	Being kind and patient with others.	Keeping active.
Having a home learning space.	Calling or video chatting to friends and family.	Learning from home.
Not being taught by my teachers.	Learning new things.	Doing things that make me happy.
Not being able to visit different places.	Being worried.	Focusing on the good things in my life.

There are so very many things at the moment that are new, uncertain, and quite tricky. It's really important that we don't get too worried or concerned about all of this. We need to recognise that there are lots of things going on that we CANNOT CHANGE, and we need to let go of those things, put them to one side. To quote the wonderful Queen Elsa, when she was in her own 'Kingdom of Isolation' – "LET IT GO!!!!!"

For instance, we can't change the fact that there is a virus out there. We can't change the fact that we're not able to meet our friends. So there is no point in letting ourselves feel bad or sad about those things for too long. Instead, we can choose to think about what we CAN change. For example, we can't meet up with friends, but WE CAN call them, message them, video-call them... We can't change the fact that there is a virus out there, but we can keep ourselves safe. We might be missing school – but we can carry on learning...

It's OK to have worries, to feel sad, to feel upset. But it's more helpful to concentrate on the **GOOD STUFF** instead. We don't know how long this is going to last – so let's make the best of it.

Enjoy, have fun, laugh and talk together – that way we can all look back on this time and remember all of the great things.



Talking about worries

It's OK to have worries. There are lots of changes, things we hear, things we wonder about, things we don't know. When we have a worry, it might be because we're thinking things that actually aren't true. This activity helps us sort out what we BELIEVE and what is REAL.

So if you were thinking, "I'm going to catch the coronavirus", you would put it in the first column. Then you could do some research, ask an adult – or maybe you actually already know what the answer is! In the second column, you could then write, "If I wash my hands, keep a safe distance, stay in my home, and practice good hygiene, I probably won't." Phew!!!

What I THINK...	What Is REAL...

Focus On The Good

One thing that can help us is having a positive way of thinking. So, instead of concentrating on all the BAD stuff, we start to get into the habit of thinking about all the GOOD stuff. And much more often! It can help our happiness and our sense of everything being OK for us.

At the moment, the virus is out there BUT:

- Lots of people are helping to keep us safe and well
- So many people have volunteered to be NHS helpers. They won't earn any money from it – they are doing it out of kindness and because they want to help
- Lots of people are taking care of their neighbours, who are isolated
- Many people are caring for the elderly and keeping them safe, even if it means they are away from their own families
- Lots of people are raising money for the NHS, or for families who are struggling
- Big companies have stopped their own work to make ventilators for the hospitals

There is so much more 'goodness' going on in the world! Look for it every day – and you will find it. You can bring it into your own home, too – by helping out, by being kind, and by being thoughtful.

There are lots of things you can do to help you keep thinking positively. Here are some activities you can do:

- Make a poster supporting the NHS, or for people who are ill in hospital (*If it's A4 size, or less, you can laminate it and send it to NHS Nightingale, or your local hospital*)
- Write a "Thank you" letter to the staff at your local hospital
- Make a poster for the bin men/postmen/delivery drivers, saying "Thanks", and put it on your door
- Collect some news articles about people doing caring, kind and helpful things, and make a scrapbook with them
- Write a letter to a friend/family member telling them all the things you like about them

Ways I Can Support Myself

Staying at home, with the same people and having lots of changes in your life can sometimes make you feel cranky, or a bit fed up. Sometimes you might feel other emotions that aren't great. So we need to find things that cheer us up, make us happy, take our minds off the negative thoughts – and help keep us positive.

Fill these boxes – you can keep adding to them later. If you do start feeling a bit low, sad, or worried, you can take some time out to do something from the boxes and help yourself to feel better.

Things that I love to do...

Things that help me relax...

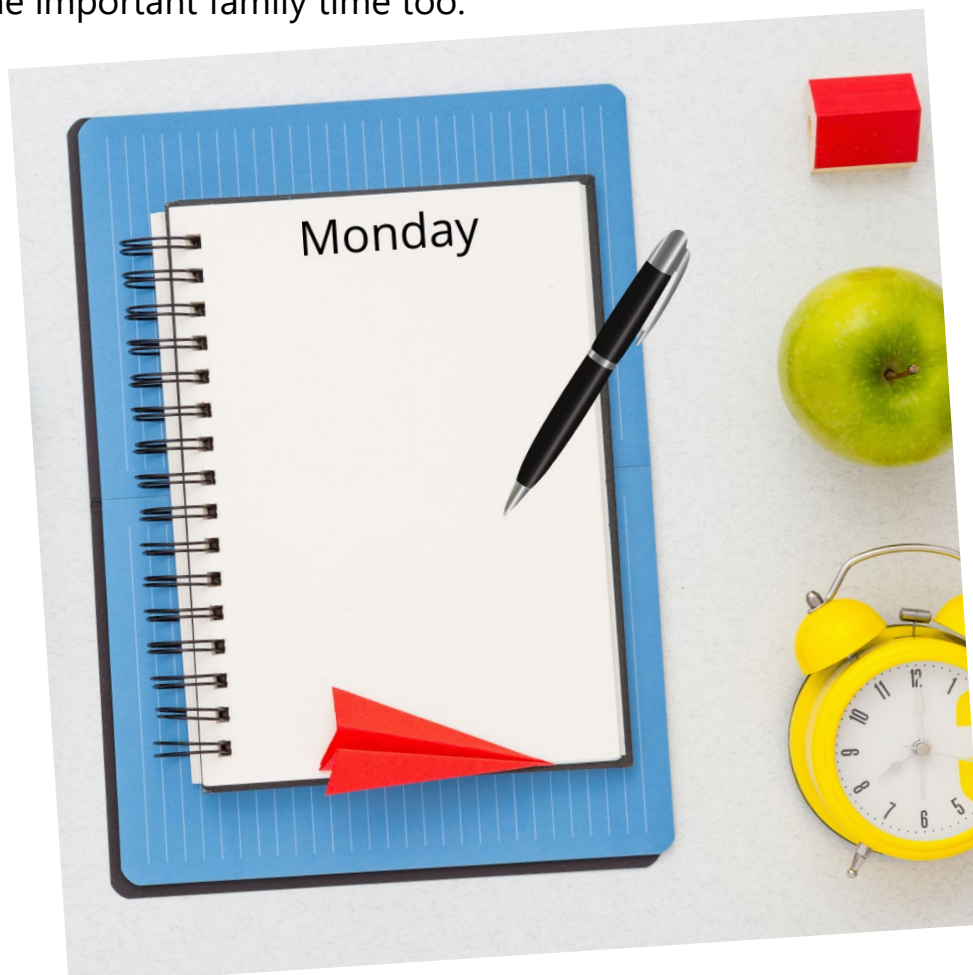
List of things I can do when I'm bored...

Have a Routine

When a lot of things around us are suddenly different and our usual day-to-day routine changes, it can be a little bit unsettling. It can help our general wellbeing if we have some kind of routine. It helps to give us back a little bit of control in our life and can be reassuring, as well as keeping us on track with achieving daily goals. These goals shouldn't be huge – we don't want to put extra pressure on ourselves, but we're much more likely to achieve them if they are written down.

It's important that we still go to bed and wake up at regular times, that we keep clean, change our clothes and brush our teeth – nobody wants to be at home with someone stinky!!! We also need to have regular mealtimes and make sure we're drinking enough water.

Why not get together as a family to draw up a routine? Don't make it too complicated and make sure it can be changed if you need to. Don't put too much pressure on yourself. By all means, make room for schoolwork – but also make room for fun stuff and things you enjoy. Put in some important family time too.



If Things Get Too Much...

It's natural that we have times when we feel a bit overwhelmed. When things get a bit too much for us – especially when there have been BIG changes.

Think of it like a cloud, like an April shower. What we're thinking and feeling is like a rain cloud above our head. If we stop for a few moments, explore what we're feeling, take some deep breaths... we can then let all those emotions out of the cloud, like rain falling and emptying the cloud. Then we can just blow that empty cloud away.

Sometimes it helps to take a bit of time out and do this:

- A** Accept what you're feeling and thinking – it's OK to have these feelings
- P** Pause for a moment or two. Breathe deeply, close your eyes
- R** Reflect on what you're feeling or thinking. Is it real? Is it true?
How do you know? Does it matter? Do I need to talk to someone?
- I** It will pass, remind yourself that this is what you are feeling now, but this feeling will pass. Let the thought or feeling go, floating away on a cloud
- L** Look at your surroundings. Notice your breathing. What can you see?
What can you hear? What can you touch? Be still for a minute.
Then off you go, focus on a new activity, listen to some music, watch a funny video, read a book... **do something that makes you happy!**



Journaling

Keeping a diary – or journaling – is a great way to help you with your thoughts and feelings through this difficult time. I was talking to a friend of mine who uses journaling most days because she thinks it helps her.

Ellie is 12 years old. She finds that keeping a journal helps, using questions like: "What's making me feel this way?", or "What am I grateful for today?" She told us, "Those questions make me think about what I've done during the day and what's been positive. And also to write about the things that I'm worrying over. When I write it down, it helps me to actually see what I'm feeling and sort it out in my head. If I'm feeling really bad about something, I know that it's a good idea to talk to someone about it. Mostly though, it just helps me think things through. And that usually makes me feel better".

You can make your own journal by putting some sheets of paper together, or by using a notebook. It's great to decorate it too, colour it, do some drawings, or add images and stickers. You don't have to have a new page for each day – just write down the date and start writing.

Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself:

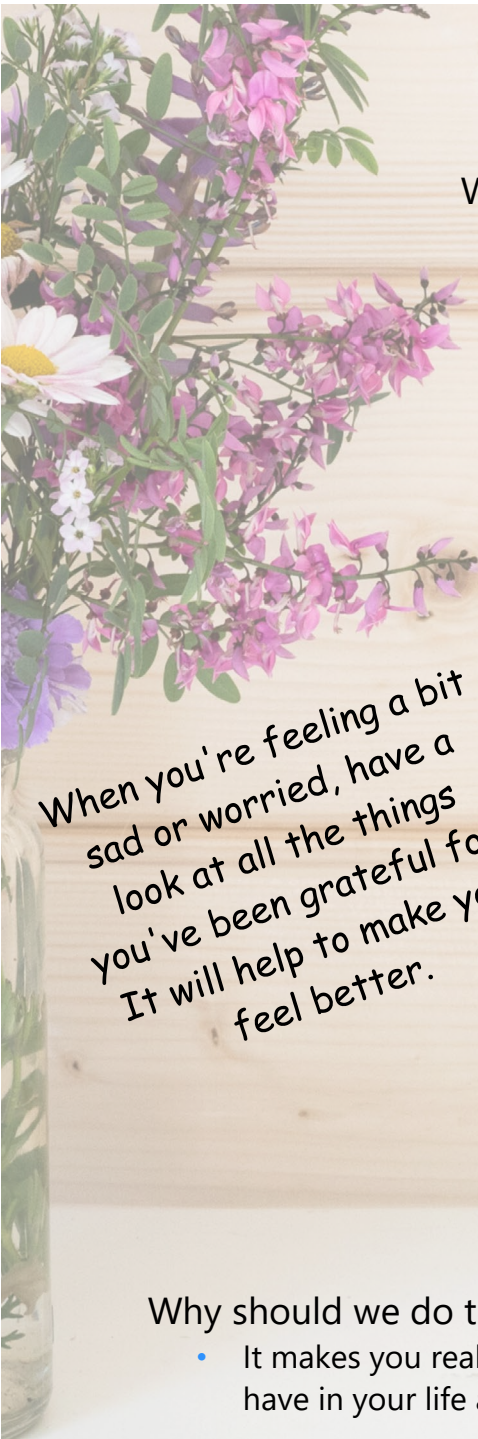
- What have I been doing today?
- What was positive?
- What did I enjoy?
- Why did I enjoy it?
- What wasn't so helpful?
- How did I feel?
- Why did I feel like this?
- What could I do differently?
- What might help?
- Who could I tell?



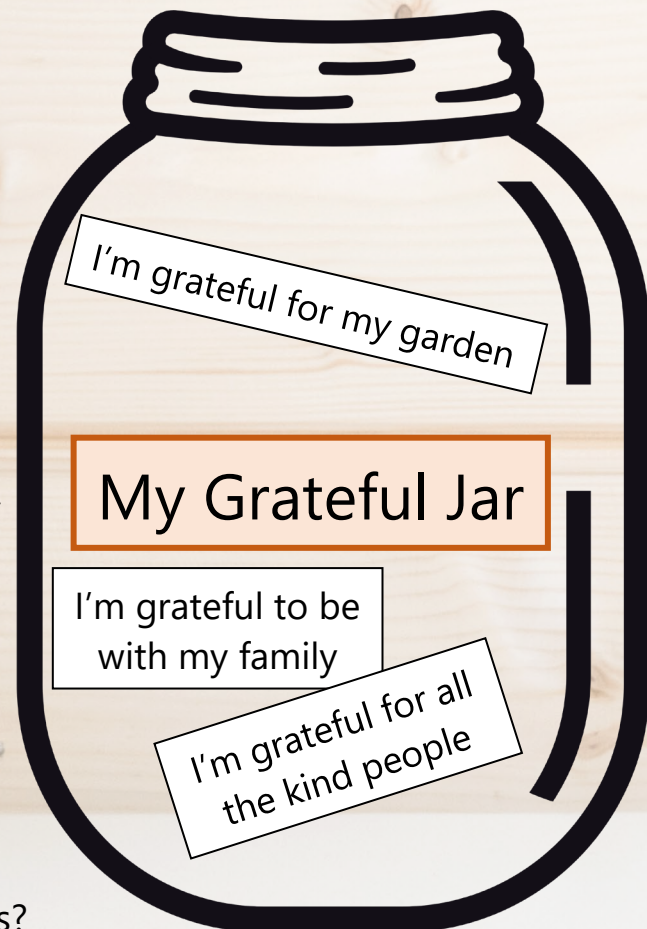
My Grateful Jar

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR GRATEFUL JAR

Every day, try to think of something that you're really grateful for. Write it down and put it in the jar.



When you're feeling a bit sad or worried, have a look at all the things you've been grateful for. It will help to make you feel better.



Why should we do this?

- It makes you really think about all of the great things you have in your life and be thankful for them
- It helps change your brain from thinking negative things (not so good) to positive things (really good)
- It helps you feel good emotions like 'happy' more often
- It helps you to understand what kind of things make you happy - so that you can do more of them

Let's Talk About Coronavirus

What do you want to know?

There's a lot going on – don't be afraid to ask some questions. There are some things we know and some things we don't – but ask away.

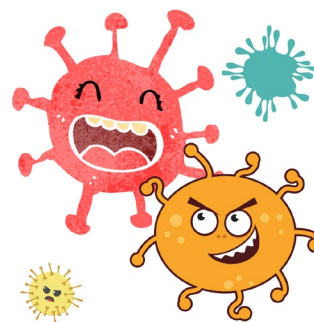
What is an epidemic, and what's a pandemic?

These two words have been on the news, the radio, and have been used a lot when people are talking about coronavirus. But what do they actually mean?

Epidemic means that a disease is spreading quickly through a *community* (like London or Scotland) at a particular time. An epidemic turns into a **pandemic** when an infection spreads quickly throughout the *world* at a specific time.

What is a coronavirus, and what's COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses, and a new one (also known as SARS-CoV-2) can spread from person to person, infecting people. If you catch this virus, get infected and get sick, you have a disease called COVID-19.



How does it spread?

People can carry the virus and spread it to other people by coughing, sneezing, and touching things. Then other people can catch it, often after they have touched their face. It can also stay on some surfaces. That's why we are all washing our hands more often and for at least 20 seconds. It's also why you might see people wearing face masks and gloves. It's why we are staying in our homes and isolating from others.

What can I do to protect myself and others?

- If possible – stay at home! Do NOT go out, unless you're going for exercise (like cycling, or a walk).
- Stay AT LEAST 2 metres away from all other people (except those in your household)
- Wash your hands regularly with hot water and soap (for at least 20 seconds), or clean them with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser gel, or spray

- If you cough or sneeze, make sure you cover your mouth, or catch it with a tissue and throw the tissue in the bin immediately and wash your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth where possible
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell

What are the symptoms?

People sometimes have all of these symptoms, sometimes only a few, and some people catch the virus, but have NO symptoms. These are common symptoms:

- A high temperature
- A dry cough that won't go away
- Shortness of breath
- Some people lose their sense of smell and/or taste

REMEMBER – if you have ANY of these symptoms, it could be a sign that you have coronavirus, but it ***doesn't necessarily mean that you do***. These symptoms are the same as other more common illnesses like a cold, flu, or hay fever, ***so there's no need to panic*** if you do catch yourself coughing.

What if someone has these symptoms and feels unwell?

Anyone with these symptoms should NOT go to a GP surgery or hospital because the virus could then spread to other people. If you have symptoms that include a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should stay at home and check the NHS COVID-19 website. This may suggest that you call 111 – someone will then give you advice on the next steps to take.

How many people recover from coronavirus?

Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing extensive treatment. Older people, and those with other serious health issues like heart or lung problems, are more likely to become seriously ill if they have the virus.

Is there a cure?

Because the virus is so new, there is currently no vaccination against it, and no specific treatment for the illness. The main treatments involve relieving the symptoms of the virus while your body fights it. Again – most people won't have serious problems and will recover quickly.

Why are we staying home, self-isolating, and social distancing?

It's VERY, VERY important that anyone who has the virus does NOT spread it to other people. And it can be spread by people who feel fine and have no symptoms.

So, restrictions have now been placed on people's movement – this will help limit the spread of coronavirus.

Why will staying at home help?

- By staying at home, we can help stop the spread of the disease. This helps protect the more vulnerable people, such as older people, or those who have other serious health problems. This is important because our hospitals and medical staff wouldn't be able to cope if too many people got seriously ill around the same time.
- Older people and those with health problems have been advised to 'self-isolate' so that they don't catch the virus. This means that they stay home and don't see anyone else, or leave their home.
- Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should also self-isolate for at least 7 days from when the symptoms started, and anyone living in the same home will then need to isolate for 14 days.

These restrictions may seem hard – but it will keep more people from getting the virus, and getting very sick.

So, we're helping ourselves and so many others too.



You've Got This!

Keep Safe & Strong



Sue Atkins

The Parenting Expert



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