



COVID-19 Toolkit

AMWF

FORUM MEMBERS

Assael

Assael Architecture

Hawkins\Brown

Hawkins\Brown

ALLFORD
HALL
MONAGHAN
MORRIS

AHMM



HTA Design

ARCHITYPE

Architype

KSRARCHITECTS

KSR Architects

DARLING ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS

Darling Associates

make

Make Architects

FeildenCleggBradleyStudios

Feilden Clegg Bradley

Metropolitan
Workshop
Architecture + UrbanismMetropolitan
Workshop

Glenn Howells Architects

Glenn Howells

Orms

Orms

GRIMSHAW

Grimshaw

PDP | LDN

PDP London

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Architects' Benevolent
SocietyMelissa Kirkpatrick
Student RepresentativeRIBA 
Architecture.comThe Royal Institute of
British Architects

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this Toolkit, which we have produced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We know this is a difficult time for everybody and that the unique circumstances we find ourselves in are not conducive to optimum mental health.

We therefore wanted to create something which could offer advice and signpost resources to people who may be finding things challenging, or who want to ensure they are considering the mental health of their staff. While this Toolkit has been aimed at people involved in architecture, we are sure the advice in here will be helpful for people across many industries, so we would encourage you to share it with anybody who you think might find it helpful.

One of the major challenges right now is that no two people's situations are the same. Some people are furloughed while others are busier than ever. Some of you will be isolating in a 2-room city apartment while others may be a large country house. We've heard from students worried about their route to graduation, and parents wondering how on earth they can get any work done alongside home-schooling their three children.

We probably could have written separate Toolkits for parents, for students, for furloughed and for working people – but because of the urgency of the situation we felt it best to get information to people in a fast and concise way. We've therefore produced a Toolkit which focuses on advice that can benefit all of us as humans. We hope that, whatever your situation, you find it helpful and it makes things just a little bit easier during these extraordinary times.

We'd also just like to remind everybody that we aren't mental health professionals: we are simply a collective working in the architecture industry who are passionate about creating better places to work. This Toolkit has therefore been informed by the most up-to-date advice from the NHS and mental health charities, as well as our own practices' experiences during this time. We'd like to thank all of those practices who have contributed to this Toolkit and overseen its creation.

Stay healthy and safe,

The Architects' Mental Wellbeing Forum Team

1 STAYING POSITIVE

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS – Observe breathing, listen, pause, eat & walk mindfully, meditate daily, connect with your senses. If you're trying this out for the first time, we could recommend the following:

- <https://www.headspace.com/>
- <https://www.calm.com/>

TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF - Self care ideas below!

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Take a bath | Go for a run |
| Listen to music | Take a bike ride |
| Take a nap | Eat a meal in silence |
| Watch the stars | Turn off technology |
| Watch the clouds | Move twice as slowly |
| Light a candle | Find a relaxing scent |
| Let out a sigh | Create your own coffee break |
| Fly a kite | Pet a furry creature |
| Sit in nature | Read or watch something funny |
| Write a letter | Call a friend |
| Learn something new | Engage in small acts of kindness |
| Read a book | Give thanks |
| Take deep breaths | Put on some music and dance |
| Meditate | Write a poem |
| Notice your body | Make something |
| Take a walk | Do some stretches |

DAILY GRATITUDE - This can boost your mental health, helps you accept change and relieves stress. Gratitude journals are a great way of focusing your attention on positive thoughts/actions on a daily basis. Writing down 3 things you're grateful for at the start of the day and 3 good things that happened at the end.

MAKE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE - Create short, medium and long term goals, and when achieving these goals, your brain will receive a boost of Dopamine, also known as your "feel good" neurotransmitter – which can't be a bad thing!

LEARN SOMETHING NEW - It's time to pick up that hobby you've always put on the back burner, or haven't had time for. Hobbies can help to relieve stress whilst filling free time. Pick up those knitting needles or blow the dust of that old jigsaw puzzle.

- Boredom buster resources: <https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-online-resources-for-anyone-who-is-isolated-at-home?fbclid=IwAR1OZ6sLsL RnrXlw7mDfeFXunEZY7sVfyy NbyCl7oc9h0oYP4lqe6DVX6qs>
- National Theatre at Home: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/nt-at-home>
- Culture in Quarantine: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/arts>

BE OPTIMISTIC - Focusing on positive not negative. We can lower our rates of depression and levels of stress, not to mention it can increase our coping skills through difficult times, if we can think more positively. This takes time and practice, so a little patience is required!

- Try to be open to humour.
- Follow a healthy lifestyle.
- Identify potential areas of change.
- Practice positive encouraging self-talk.

2 PRACTICING & STRENGTHENING OUR RESILIENCE

IMPROVE YOUR ENERGY - Stay on your feet. Start the day with movement. Break up sitting time. Use what equipment you have at home. Finish the day with stretching or a walk. Set your own goals knowing your limitations and what's available to you. And try increasing them as we go through this.

- <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/mar/15/from-yoga-to-crossfit-the-10-best-online-home-workouts>
- <https://www.thecut.com/2016/01/best-free-yoga-classes-online.html>

GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP - Our immune system is boosted through slow wave sleep (which is when we're at our deepest), so it's vital that we find ways to encourage it.

- Here is some reading on how to boost our sleeping patterns:
<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-guidelines-covid-19-isolation>
- And for some bedtime reading – try 'Why We Sleep' by Matthew Walker <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/295665/why-we-sleep/9780141983769.html>

EATING AND DRINKING WELL - It's important during this period of lockdown to pay attention to what we are consuming, through food and drink.

- The key with eating well is to aim for sources of steady energy – protein & fibre. Planning and preparing ahead will encourage you not to snack, and if you do, try to reach for healthy options (nuts/seeds/fruit).
- Keeping hydrated has a major effect on energy levels and brain function, we should all be aiming for approximately 2 litres per day.
- The recommended alcohol allowance for both men and women is 14 units per week. This should be spread over 3 or more days. You can calculate your alcohol units using: <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/interactive-tools/unit-calculator>
 - Some great tips on drinking safely through this lockdown can be found here:
<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2020/coronavirus-top-tips-on-alcohol-and-mental-health>

PRACTICE ACTS OF KINDNESS, (IF FIT AND WELL) – Volunteer in the local community/ help out neighbours. This has been proved to promote feelings of happiness and peace. Maintaining happiness is a key to resiliency and we can use it to boost the ability to stay grounded during difficult times.

PRIORITISE - what's important to you, what gives you purpose and what's obtainable. Achieving these will boost your wellbeing.

ENSURE THAT YOUR WORKING DAY CONSISTS OF ROUTINE - Take set lunch breaks if possible, put the laptop away at the end of the day. Create a working space that doesn't compromise your down time area.

3 STAYING IN TOUCH OUT OF SIGHT ISN'T OUT OF MIND

ONLINE COMMUNITIES - So many various social platforms to do this with colleagues/friends. Have weekly quizzes, maybe watch a Netflix series and compare thoughts at the end, but stay in touch with each other. And don't be afraid to over-communicate, it's important that people know you care.

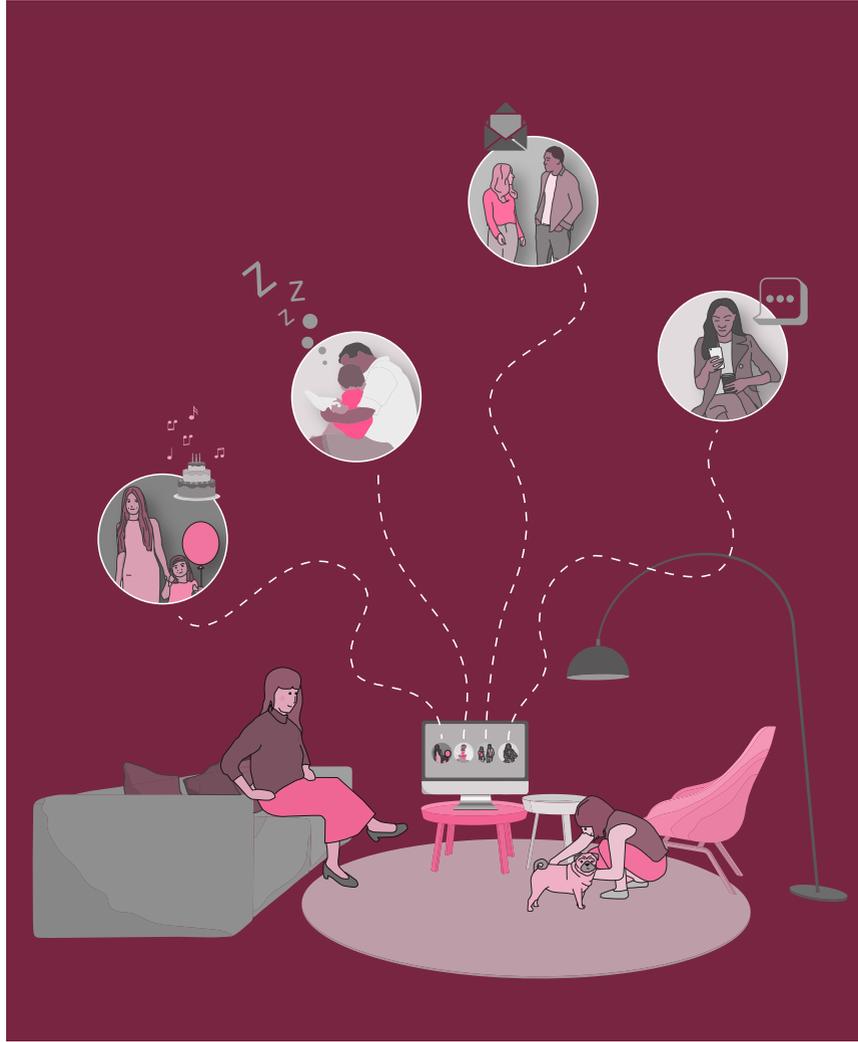
- Zoom
- Microsoft Teams
- Houseparty
- Netflix Party: <https://www.netflixparty.com/>

KEEP TRACK OF WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD - Limit the time you spend listening to the news and reading social media posts, and choose your sources wisely. This can often be a cause of anxiety if we over expose ourselves.

DON'T FORGET THOSE AT HOME - For those that live with family & friends, and trying to work from home, schedule in lunches and breaks with them.

DISPLAY EMPATHY AND BUILD MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS - This will enable us to support each other through these challenging times. This can be arranged through a buddying system within businesses/practices.

- This should result in a number of benefits:
 - Improved mental health;
 - Provide us with higher self-confidence;
 - Increase your resilience.
- This can be done by genuinely listening, practicing forgiveness and being present.



RESOURCES & SUPPORT

We hope that you found this Covid-19 AMWF Toolkit for Practices useful. We would welcome thoughts, input and further references from the profession so that we can improve and update the guidance during this uncertain time.

If you would like to get in touch with us, please visit www.amwf.co.uk

FURTHER RESOURCES & SUPPORT SERVICES



Wellbeing at work resources from NEF: <https://www.nefconsulting.com/our-services/strategy-culture-change/well-being-at-work/>

NICE guidelines on mental health at work: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph22>

Time to Change Employer Pledge: <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/get-your-workplace-involved/employer-pledge#toc-2>

Association of mental health advocates: <https://www.amha-uk.org/>

Money and Mental Health Policy Institute: <https://www.moneyandmentalhealth.org/>

MHFA resources: <https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/>

Depression Alliance: <https://www.depressionalliance.org/>

Centre for Mental Health: <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/>

Elefriends - a supportive online community: <https://www.elefriends.org.uk/>

Mindful - a website full of useful tips on mindfulness: <https://www.mindful.org/>

Students

Young Minds: <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/>
<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/social-media-and-mental-health/>

Student Minds: <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/coronavirus.html#looking>

Also be sure to check your university intranet pages for further advice.

FURTHER RESOURCES & SUPPORT SERVICES



Working from Home

- Posturite - working from home quick fixes to support posture and ensure we remain healthy and productive when working from home: <https://youtu.be/tBFf1NZkKKE>
- Setting up your workstation at home: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0xWR_bs1DY
- Guide to lockdown living: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/apr/01/start-a-daily-routine-and-make-the-weekends-different-the-isolation-experts-guide-to-lockdown-living-coronavirus>
- Five ways to work well from home: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51868894>

Anxiety UK

Anxiety UK's YouTube channel features a library of Coronavirus related webinars addressing various topics including isolation, mental health & staying at home, parental anxiety, sleeping well, dealing with panic, etc: <https://www.youtube.com/anxietyukofficial>

They can also be found here on their Coronanxiety support & resources page: <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/coronanxiety-support-resources/>

Anxiety UK are also running a series of online support sessions, they will be held twice a week, every week which can be found here: <http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/products/support-groups/online-facilitated-peer-led-support-group/>

Mind

Some advice and information on mental health and working from home: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/online-mental-health/online-offline-balance/>

Architects' Benevolent Society

The Architects' Benevolent Society is continuing to offer mental health support during this time in conjunction with Anxiety UK. This can be accessed through their website (<https://absnet.org.uk/need-help/how-we-help/mental-health-support>) or via the helpline 020 3918 8588.

<https://absnet.org.uk/news/covid-19-statement>

<https://absnet.org.uk/news/redundancy-support>

Advice for small businesses and the self employed: <https://www.fsb.org.uk/campaign/covid19.html>

A number of new sources of support are also emerging such as **The Help Hub** (<https://www.thehelphub.co.uk/>) - a website where you can have a free 20 minute conversation with a therapist to discuss how you are feeling and give some advice on ways to improve how you are feeling.

We also encourage you to look at the **Architects' Mental Wellbeing Forum's 'Resources' Page** (<https://www.amwf.co.uk/resources>) which contains links to many useful helplines and websites.

Finally, please remember you can always contact **Samaritans** (24-7) on 116 123.

The Architects' Mental Wellbeing Forum

www.amwf.co.uk

Supported by the Royal Institute of British Architects and

The Architects' Benevolent Society

