

Keeping well during the coronavirus crisis:

The Impact of Coronavirus on Mental and Physical Wellbeing



Key findings

2 April 2020

Sample Details

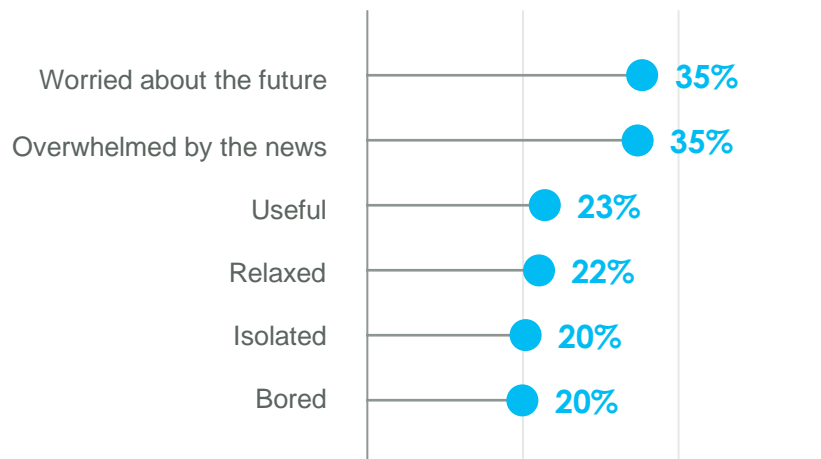
2005 nationally representative UK adults. Results have been weighted to representative criteria.
Fieldwork dates: 19th to 20th March 2020

The mental wellbeing of many UK adults has been impacted by coronavirus

The pandemic we are currently facing will have a big effect on mental wellbeing as well as physical, and this is something that has been emphasised by many of the organisations working in the wellbeing space. Over one in ten (12%) UK adults know or suspect that they currently have or have previously had coronavirus.

Almost half (47%) of UK adults say that their mental wellbeing has been impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. And in line with this we've seen 35% say they have felt worried about the future regularly over the past week. Other ways people have been feeling over the past week is shown below:

How UK adults have been feeling over the past week



Self-isolation and the strain on mental health

Self-isolation can place further strain on mental health, with 51% of those who are self-isolating saying it has had an impact on their mental health versus 42% of those who are not.

"I am on Day 5 of isolation and have started to get quite emotional and weepy. I am scared that I may need to be hospitalised. I am totally stressed by the idea that I will need to self-isolate for months. I am a social animal and people person -I usually go to concerts, the theatre, opera and ballet and I like to learn and develop so go to galleries and museums. Being online only partially helps"

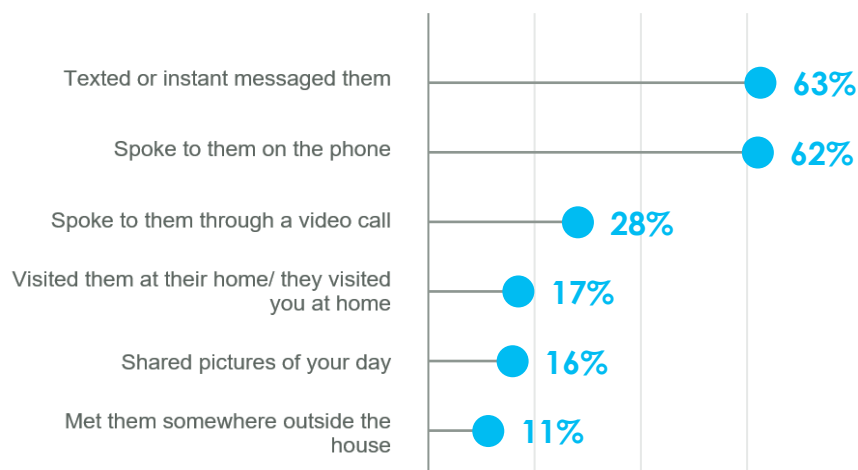
55-64 year old woman, self-isolating alone.

Boredom is also another reality of being indoors for prolonged periods - 24% of those who are self-isolating saying they often felt bored over the past week (vs. 15% amongst those not isolating). The impact of this isolation on people is huge, and the scale of it even greater when you take into account that 55% are currently self-isolating.

The importance of keeping connected during the coronavirus crisis

In this time of change and uncertainty, people are reaching out to their families and friends for support. Almost half (49%) of the UK population saying they have spoken to their families more than normal since the outbreak happened. The most common ways people are keeping connected with their family and friends are digital: texting/ instant messaging (63%), phone calls (62%) and video calls (28%). However, 17% have visited their family/ friends, or have been visited by them in their own home.

Ways of keeping in touch with friends and family



Support from friends and family is also key source of support for people’s mental wellbeing - 37% said they have spoken to family members online (including over the phone) to help improve their mental wellbeing during this time. There is a notably large difference between men and women here, with women being much more likely to lean on their family for support than men (46% vs. 28%). As we know that there are already challenges with men opening up about their mental health, it’s vital that we look out for each other at this time now more than ever.

Keeping healthy – both physically and mentally

As well as talking to family and friends via online means, people are also using exercise (37%) and healthy balanced diets (27%) as ways to improve their mental wellbeing. Structured home routines (19%) and meditation/ mindfulness (8%) are also popular for improving mental wellbeing.

Looking specifically at staying physically active, half (50%) have used walking as a way to improve their physical health this week, and with the good weather, 24% have taken this as an opportunity to get out and do some gardening. Other popular activities include:

- Went for a walk (50%)
- Gardening (24%)
- Other exercises at home (22%)
- Went for a run (8%)
- Use a YouTube / digital exercise class (7%)
- Went cycling (7%)
- Went to the gym (6%)
- Yoga (6%)

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