

How lockdown has affected me

Donna's story

Donna is a working, single mother of two young boys and has elderly, vulnerable parents. She talks about how anxious and worried she felt at first and the changes she created to help her mentally prepare for lockdown.

“As a single mother of two school age boys, I am used to a fast-paced life and juggling many things at one time. Having been in a difficult marriage, I felt I was mentally tough and had my life on track and coped well. I was really looking forward to spring and the year ahead.

However, at end of February, rumblings of the COVID-19 virus began surfacing and a week later we were seeing reports of suspected infections and some schools were closed for deep cleaning. Facebook started to flood with panicked posts and messages on WhatsApp groups were filled with fear, this is when the anxiety hit.



“Usually super strong emotionally, I began to worry. I started to worry about everything which was unlike me.”

I was also very concerned for my parents, especially my father who is vulnerable with blood Cancer. Then my eldest child started to show symptoms which meant isolating as a family. Thinking it would be for 14 days, we are now in week 9!

To begin with, I was reading everything in the news and watching every broadcast with morbid fascination. Hearing our Prime Minister declare that we were in lockdown made me feel bewildered and concerned. Having so far avoided social media groups I decided we were all in this for the long haul and the only way to make it work was to accept this as our ‘normal’ and make the best of it.

Soon I established a routine, trying to balance work and home schooling for two different key stage groups. I printed out a timetable and created three separate work areas.

“Creating these changes helped me to mentally prepare for lockdown. It was important for me to manage it properly otherwise I knew I would struggle and feel negative about the challenges ahead.”

I even changed my living room into a play space and we happily decorated our windows with colourful rainbows to celebrate our amazing NHS and show our support. We exercise together, doing Joe Wicks work outs, yoga, outdoor bike rides and long walks. We are fortunate to live near the river and some beautiful lakes.

Going to the supermarket has been difficult with two children and a few people have directed their anger at me, but I don't have anyone to leave my children with. I am also shopping for my parents and my grandparents.

To help with my emotions, I have limited my time on social media and my exposure to the news. I am ensuring that I have video chats with family and close friends. I am being kind to myself, letting myself feel sad sometimes and other times throwing myself into a project like painting. I have also had to relax about how much work the children complete. It is far better for us to be happy than to tick off every piece of learning. I'm also taking time out for myself, reading, listening to music or a podcast, or chatting with a friend.”

Find local charities and community groups who are offering support in Surrey, including mental health support and help with shopping, by visiting the [Coronavirus Help & Support page](#) on our website or call our Helpdesk on 0303 303 0023.