Teenagers’ Experiences of Life in Lockdown (TELL): Caring for your wellbeing
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We asked 16- to 19-year-olds what advice they had for others managing lockdown. They told us it is important to put your mental health first, and that how you do that depends on the individual. Here’s what they advised, entirely in their words. This advice is also similar to evidence around what helps with wellbeing - so The TELL Study Team support it!

“Go easy on yourself...”

- It’s okay to feel angry, sad, and confused
- A lot of people are “improving themselves” in lockdown, but comparing to others isn’t beneficial
- This is a major crisis, we have to cut ourselves some slack
- Writing down how you feel helps you to try and understand why
- Don’t beat yourself up over not doing what you’ve planned, and praise yourself when you do better than you expected
“Spend time doing the things you love...”

- Do whatever makes you feel happy!
- Take time for yourself whilst doing something you enjoy
- Finding a hobby can make you feel better
- Listen to music you’ve known for a while or re-watch a show you really enjoyed the first time
- Try to find excitement in things that you wouldn’t normally be excited about

“Stick to a routine...”

- Make sure you get up and dressed every day, and try to leave the house once
- Setting mini-goals to achieve every day can take away negative feelings and help you feel better
- Have set times for working with consistent breaks
- Make new traditions, for example watch a film with your family every Friday
- Try to find new things to do with your time so you feel like your day is a little different
“Stay in touch...”

- Keep talking to your friends
- Phone your family and friends regularly
- Support those around you
- Spend time with your loved ones and love them hard
- Talk to the people you miss and let them know you miss and appreciate them

“You’re not alone...”

- Don’t feel like you have to go through this alone
- Reach out to those that care about you - trust me, you’re not a burden
- Talk to people about how you feel on a daily basis
- If you’re feeling anxious or depressed then call a friend you trust
- Don’t be afraid to reach out to services if you’re struggling. Childline are there if you want to talk (0800 1111)
“Try your best to remain positive...”

- When you’re feeling depressed, think about your future - this won’t last forever.
- Imagine how good it’ll feel when you can actually go out and do all the things you love again.
- Don’t see this as a lockdown, but as a retreat.
- It is really important that we remind each other that this is only temporary.
- Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass but learning to dance in the rain.

What is The TELL Study?
TELL (Teenagers’ Experiences of Life in Lockdown) is a research project led by researchers at The University of Manchester and Liverpool John Moores University. TELL aims to understand 16- to 19-year-olds’ experiences of the UK lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly their wellbeing. We asked teenagers aged 16-19 in the UK to provide a written account of their experiences of lockdown, telling us what lockdown looked like for them, what it felt like, and how they managed it. We also asked what advice they would give to others. More than 100 teenagers shared their experiences with us. This briefing shares the advice our participants offered for other teenagers. Thanks are due to the wider TELL Study team: Alisha O’Neill, Terry Hanley, and Kirsty Pert (of The University of Manchester).

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