



## “What do I do?”

### 6 Trauma-Informed Strategies to promote Self-Care.

#### 1 Create predictability

We need to organise our lives in as a predictable way as we can so that we can establish some elements of certainty. Make schedules and establish routines; wake up and go to bed at the same time each day; know when you are going to make telephone calls, eat meals and complete chores etc. Create visual ways of showing your plans e.g. calendars and lists.

#### 2 Mobilise

In stressful and traumatic events, we are predisposed to activate our fight/flight system. In the current situation, that can be challenging. We need to find safe ways of maintaining our ‘mobilisation’ for safer emotional regulation. Consider daily exercise (whatever space you have), deep breathing exercises or yoga. Be aware of your emotions and physiological responses.

#### 3 Increase Connection

Not being seen, paid attention to and not being heard are all dangers of traumatic events. It is so important that we maintain contact with others during this time of social distancing. Connection through pictures, calls, videos, games, making music, sharing stories. Finding a rhythm increases attunement and builds our sense of connection.

#### 4 Become ‘mindful’ of being ‘in the moment’

During traumatic events we may find ourselves ‘numb’ or ‘spaced’ out from reality. It’s a natural way of self-protection. We need to find ways to stay in the moment safely. For example, cook meals together, take care of things, allow yourself some self-compassion. Anticipate the sense of losing time and encourage thoughts that every moment is different from the next - there are different feelings, thoughts, emotions and sensations. Everything passes.

#### 5 Establish Safety

Safety can often be established by touch and cuddles with loved ones, however with social distancing you may need to find alternatives. Think of what makes you feel calm and safe, perhaps listening to a particular piece of music or wrapping up in a blanket, drinking herbal tea or a mug of hot chocolate. We need to establish an internal sense of self and have spaces where we can withdraw to where we feel safe.

#### 6 Develop Sense of Purpose

We may feel a lack of purpose and lose our identity during traumatic events. It’s important therefore to be involved in and to do things that affirm who we are. Make efforts to identify simple things that allow you to maintain a sense of purpose, whatever your role, within a family, as a friend, or in your career.