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Hello chuile dhuine,

Tá súil agam go bhfuil sibh ag déanadh go maith agus ag fanacht slán.

Táim cinnte go raibh na seachtainí atá caite deacair oraibh ar fad. Mar dhéagóir, tá sé nadúrtha díobh castáil le cairde, a bheith sóisialta agus a bheith neamhspleach chomh maith. Sílim go bharr sin go bhfuil na srianta náisiúnta seo níos deacaire oraibhse den chuid is mó.

Measaím go bhfuil a fhíos ag cuid aigí go bhfuil Clár Meantóireachta (Mentoring Programme) ar fáil uainne, an Clár Críochnúcháin Scoile Tuaiscirt agus Iarthair Chonamara, sa scoil gach seachtain má bhíonn oraibh labhairt le duine éigin neodrach faoi inní a bhíonn ag chuir isteach oraibh , nó chun tuairim duine eile a fháil ar chás i do shaoil. Tá an seirbhís sin fós ar fáil uainne, má tá gá leis. Ní uait ach teagmháil a dhéanadh le Róisín Ní Chonfaola nó mé fhéin (mo shonraí thuas) chun eileamh a dhéanadh ar an tseirbhís.

Scríobh Diarmuid, an Meantóir, an píosa seo thíos, chun a roinnt libh, maidir le bealaí chun deileáil leis an staid ina bhfuil muid faoi láthair. Tá leideanna tugtha aige chomh maith ar bhealaí chun clár ama a dhéanadh amach agus tú ag obair ón baile.

Impím oraibh ar fad coinnéail leis an obair scoile agus an staidéar ón baile, go h-áirithe sibhse atá ag déanadh an Árdtheist- b'fheidir go mbreathnaíonn sé nós go bhfuair sibh an bliain is deacaire chun na scrúdaithe a dhéanadh, ach cuimhne go tabharfaidh sé seo níos mó feidireachtaí dhuit ó thaobh do chuid cursaí i mbliana i gcomparáid le h-aon bhliain eile!

Áfach, is éard atá rithabhacht ná do leas agus sláinte intinne. Má tá tú ag streachailt le aon rud nó má tá rudaí ag fáil ró-dheacair dhuit le déileáil leis agus má theastaíonn duine neodrach uait le labhairt le- le do thoil deán teagmháil linn, tá muid anseo chun cabhrú agus níl tú leat fhéin. Is féidir linn glaoch ar an bhfón nó le físeán nó seisiúin ar líne a eagrú dhuit leis an meantóir.

Freisin, má tá aon rud eile a chuimhníonn tú ar gur feidir linn cabhrú leat leis, mar shampla le ábhair scoile, srl, deán teagmháil linn agus déanfaidh mé iarracht cabhrú leat. Tá muide fós anseo tríd an samhraidh chomh maith, mar sin, deán teagmháil liom má tá aon rud ag teastáil uait.

Fán slán agus tabhair aire díobh fhéin agus a chéile,

*Sharon Ní Cheannabháin*

*Comhardaitheoir ar Chlár Chríochnúcháin Scoile Tuaiscirt agus Iarthair Chonamara*

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Hello everyone,

I hope you are all doing well and keeping safe.

The last few weeks have been a very difficult time for you all I am sure. As a teenager, it is natural to meet with friends, be social and independent and therefore I feel it may be even more difficult for you than most.

As some of you may be aware, Connemara North and West School Completion Programme has a Mentoring Programme available in your school on a weekly basis when you need to talk to someone about troubles you may be having or to get a neutral opinion on something that may be affecting your life at a particular point. This service is still available through us if you feel you may need a listening ear or are worried about something; school or home, or indeed if you are suffering from the loss of a loved one. You only have to make contact with Róisín Ní Chonfaola, HSCL or myself directly (contact details above) if you want to avail of this at any point.

Diarmuid, our Mentor, has kindly written this piece below on tips on how to cope with the situation we are all in at the moment. He has also added tips on how to work from home and a sample timetable that you may be able to use, if your own one at the moment is not working for you.

I urge you all to keep motivated with school work and study, especially those who are in Leaving Certificate- it may seem unfair and more difficult this year, but remember that this situation might give you opportunities in your future studies that may not have been there previously- so there is always light at the end of the tunnel, so keep going!

However, what is of paramount importance is your mental health and wellbeing. If you are struggling in any way, please reach out, we are here to help, albeit at a distance. We can arrange a call, a video call or an online session for you.

Also, if you feel there is something we can do to help you other than a Mentoring Session- for example materials, books etc, please do not hesitate to contact me also and I will see what we can do. The School Completion Programme will be here during the summer months also, once school finishes for the summer.

Keep well and mind yourself and others,

Sharon Ní Cheannabháin  
Connemara North and West SCP Coordinator

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## Tips to cope with home confinement.

We are on the front-line of a heroic battle to protect ourselves, our families and our communities against this pandemic. The Covid-19 virus needs a host to replicate and survive and we are depriving it of that host, that is how we win. It is a good idea to never stop reminding ourselves of this fact, we are connected to everyone on this planet as a result.

### Negative feelings are normal

“Yahoo !! no school” allot of us cried out when we heard the news; what we did not know then was how we were going to be confined in our homes with most shops being shut and not being allowed go away on holidays. After a while it can get challenging ... why is that?

Well, part of your brain is survival-oriented, and this part can come up with streams of negative thoughts and emotions that can seem to overwhelm us. Especially when we feel confined and there is a real threat outside. This is normal and we have to accept it for now because accepting it is the first step in coping with it. Lots of people are now reporting ...

- Worry dreams or dreams of being threatened
- Feelings of overwhelm and insecurity about the future
- Loneliness and feeling isolated especially for teenagers because you are in the social period of development
- Loss of purpose or listlessness, a kind of floating through life with vague direction

### Gratitude and appreciation

This period of time will affect us all but we can do allot of good and use it as a great opportunity to improve ourselves, so we can get more out of life. One of the most powerful habits and one of the easiest is to cultivate gratitude and appreciation. Even in times of stress or loss appreciation and gratitude are possible in consideration of circumstances. Not a quasi-moral gratitude (“you should be grateful... look at all the other poor, unfortunate people in the world”) but a mindful appreciation for the good things we have, even for the good things we have had and lost.

Practicing appreciation or gratitude infuses our lives with motivation and positivity, gives us a present of the present moment, connects us to others and is very good for our immune systems and over-all mental and physical health.

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Take a moment during the day, and especially just before sleep, to have gratitude and appreciation for all the things we have.

Pick out at least five or more things every day, one from each life necessity (see below) that you really appreciate and are grateful for and write them down, then read them back to yourself out loud.

The world is not perfect but it works, we are not perfect but we are enough.

We are not entitled to anything, we can't demand and expect to be in good health, wonderful relationships, wealth, comfort, fantastic looks, a clever brain or an amazingly popular personality. If we have some of these things that's nice but if we cannot appreciate or be grateful for any of these things, they are worth nothing.

If we do not have any of the above but we appreciate what we actually have, then we have everything, we are indeed rich.

We have the choice in living an enriched and abundant life, in appreciation and gratitude or living in the poverty of negative comparison and insatiable want, no matter what or who we are, or what we have or have not.

## A bit of routine

Human beings do not do well when they have nothing to do, at no time in our evolution did we exist without some kind of purpose. When school or work is taken away we can feel as if we have lost our routine and purpose. Routine and purpose give us rhythm to our day and help calm our active bodies and minds. It is a good idea then to create purpose and routine for our emotional, mental and physical wellbeing.

Create a time-table and put it up on the wall. Make it big and colourful, if we make it easy to see and colourful it motivates us to engage with it.

- You can use coloured makers, paints, crayons, anything that creates a novel affect.
- Use words but also pictures or icons; as an example... if you add music practice to your schedule, you could draw an instrument, for exercise draw the action like a small figurine running/walking.

## The five life necessities

Support the five necessities in the time-table, this will give you balance and factor in periods of wellbeing and feeling good.

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- (i) Social connection or emotional health
- (ii) Creativity
- (iii) Purpose
- (iv) Physical health, exercise
- (v) Environment

If we cover these five necessities we usually feel more engaged and more in control of our lives.

### 1. Social connection

How do we do social connection when we are told to socially isolate? Many people are talking to others across garden walls, from the balconies of their apartments and keeping the two metre distance while still being socialising safely. However, we can also use technology to video call with our friends and family. Programs such as zoom, VSee and skype as well as what's app allow us to see and talk to others and are nearly as good as the real thing.

It is a good idea to plan social connections every day with friends and family, many people are having coffee with their friends from their phones and computers.

### 2. Creativity

Creativity is a broad term used to describe anything that we like to be engaged in. Playing an instrument, reading, making things, art, gardening, building Lego, painting or decorating.

We are creative beings and derive allot of satisfaction out of doing and creating. This is a time when we can afford to put in a bit of time to create things or learn skills.

Creation is good for learning as while we are focused on creating it allows the brain to incubate study material in our unconscious minds and it also balances and unites the brain.

### 3. Purpose

Purpose is something that we do that has direction, soaks up time, gives us fulfilment and often earns money or earns points which earn money. It is easy to do our purpose when we have to go to school or work because other people give us social motivation.

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Routine is efficient as it makes good use of time and energy because we know how to spend the time and how to do those tasks, due to practice. It is another thing entirely when we have to self-motivate to engage in our purpose; this is much more difficult but it does not need to be, if we follow some guidelines.

#### 4. Physical

Eat well, sleep well, keep a good posture and breath fully.

Above all, exercise!

Exercise is very beneficial for your mood and learning, it is essential to all human beings.

If you are athletic then you might like running, gym work etc.

If that is not your thing, you might like walking or light yoga.

Keep physically fit and strong, it boosts confidence and helps learning and is a good antidote for sitting. Sitting is the new smoking when we do too much of it, according to health experts.

This is a time when we can practice aerobic fitness, strength-training and flexibility-training. we have the time now and we can choose to put this time to good use.

There are plenty of training programmes online, from circuits to couch to 5K or simply make up our own. We do not need a lot of space to get fit. So exercise to feel good and to aid learning and concentration.

#### 5. Environment

Our environment is what-ever place we live in. Our environment has shrunk to just 2K at the moment so it is a good idea to look around and find out how we can enhance our environment.

We could combine creativity and environment by painting or arranging our surrounds so they look and feel better. Rather than look at the limits in our environment, let's look at the advantages and see can they enhance our social, purpose, physical and creative drives.



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## Time table suggestion

Here is a suggestion but some of you may want to do more study time if you have major exams coming up. The important thing is to try it out and adjust it to your personality and way of life.

Some of you may get up really early and do exercise and others may like to get up later or study first. Plan whatever works for you and at the weekend take time off so that your time table reflect a normal week.

- get up whatever time suits you

Eat a good breakfast.

30 mins learning. 15 mins break. 30 mins learning

30 mins Exercise

30 mins learning. 15 mins break. 30 mins learning

Break: creativity/play. Ring or video call a friends.

Lunch

30 mins learning. 15 mins break. 30 mins learning

30 mins exercise

30 mins learning. 15 mins break. 30 mins learning

Break: creativity/play. Ring or video call a friends.

Tea

Celebrate the now, give yourself a present of the present, life is not happening in the past or the future, life happens now; all we need to do is appreciate and look after this moment that is the purpose of life, the purpose of life is simply living.