Managing feelings about lockdown easing

This page explains feelings you might have about lockdown easing. It also provides tips on managing these feelings and where to get more support.

Lockdown has been difficult for many people. But when we were in full lockdown across the UK things might have felt more certain, as the rules were more clear. Now things might start feeling less clear, and there may be new challenges.

It can feel stressful when things are changing fast.

- What might I be feeling about lockdown easing?
- What could help me manage these feelings?

To find out what the rules are currently, see the UK Government's page on Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do.

What might I be feeling about lockdown easing?

You might feel relieved or excited when lockdown is eased where you live. But you might also find yourself feeling less positive about the changes. You may move through a range of difficult feelings and thoughts.

For example:

- Stressed and unprepared for the changes that are coming.
- Anxious, afraid or panicked that the changes may cause an increase in infections. Or that someone you care about may now be put at risk when they weren't before. For example if your children might be asked to go back to school or nursery.
- Angry or frustrated. Perhaps because people aren't following social distancing rules, and now can't avoid them. Or you feel that the changes are wrong, or the measures in place aren't enough. Other people may seem to have more freedom than you, if you're shielding or live somewhere with more restrictions. Or you may feel that the changes will make your work more difficult or higher risk, especially if you're a key worker.
- Conflicted or confused. For example, you may want to socialise more if it's allowed, but feel like perhaps you should still stay at home.
- Protective of your lockdown routine, like you'd rather not have to deal with more change or uncertainty.
- Grief for people who have died, and that you want to avoid more loss.
- Reluctant or unmotivated to rearrange events that couldn't happen during full lockdown. This could be big birthday celebrations or weddings, or everyday things like barbecues, meet-ups, or dating.
- Uneasy about relationships that have changed during full lockdown.
- Distrustful of the Government's reasons for changing the rules, or how things are portrayed in the media.
-Powerless, like you don’t have a say in anything that’s happening.
- Stigmatised or that others will avoid you. Perhaps because you've already had coronavirus, or they think your work makes you more likely to spread the virus.
- Like you’re having to make an unfair sacrifice. For example if you are being asked to go back to work when others are still able to stay at home.
- Under pressure to return to work when you can’t, or when you feel it’s not safe to.
- Unsupported or disregarded, perhaps if you’re asked to go back to work without having access to things like childcare, personal protective equipment (PPE), or safe transport.

Remember:

There’s no 'normal' response to lockdown or lockdown easing.

- Your feelings might change. You might feel one way one day, and another way the next. It might not feel logical.
- Your feelings might be influenced by:
  - your personal situation
  - what lockdown has been like for you
  - your own views about what's happened so far, and what should happen next
  - lots of things that are out of your control.

As restrictions are being lifted differently around the UK, it might feel like others are following different rules to you. Your general mood may feel quite different to full lockdown, when most people were following the same rules

**What could help me manage these feelings?**

Some of the feelings you're having now may feel difficult to manage. For those of us with existing mental health problems, they may be particularly tough. You might find it useful to try some of these suggestions.

Get practical support from organisations who can help. Talk to someone you trust. It might feel hard to start talking about how you are feeling. But many people find that sharing their experiences can help them feel better. It may be that just having someone listen to you and show they care can help in itself. If you aren't able to open up to someone close to you, you can call Samaritans any time on 116 123.

Try online peer support. Mind runs an online peer support community where you can share your experiences and hear from others.

Express your feelings creatively. You might find that it helps to express how you are feeling about the easing of lockdown by writing, drawing, painting or any other creative way that feels helpful to you. MIND

Make choices to control the things that you can. Although the coronavirus outbreak means that your choices are limited, try to focus on the things you can change. It might be helpful to list the things you can change on one piece of paper and all the things you can’t on another.
Seek help. If you are struggling with your mental health, it is ok to ask for help. A good place to start is by speaking to your GP, or your mental health team if you have one. The NHS and other services have adapted to the coronavirus outbreak. There are video and telephone appointments available, if you need to speak to someone.