

Text summary: In *The Briefing Room*, David Aaronovitch asks how are we coping*? (*translations at end of text)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2YQcQvvgJD7JsgSid6N0YvF/the-psychological-impact-of-coronavirus>

(The radio programme is available here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000h7sp>)

When normality resumes, how changed might we be? Here are 12 things we have learned.

1/ Anxiety and fear are normal, according to* Dr George Hu from Shanghai. Fear of contracting a life-threatening illness*, or a loved one* contracting the virus, can have an additional effect. There is also acute stress*, a reaction to the initial stages* after a traumatic experience.

2/ "Decreased frustration tolerance": this may lead to taking things out* on family or housemates. We use our frustration and tolerance ability to tolerate lockdown*, so there is less available for family, work and other relationships.

3/ 15% of us are finding lockdown "extremely difficult": An opinion poll* by King's College London and Ipsos MORI indicates 15% of people are finding it "extremely difficult". A further 14% said it was "very likely or certain" to become more difficult. 6% said they had phoned counselling or support services*.

4/ Older people find the lockdown easier than young people: Professor Bobby Duffy from King's says, "it is quite generational, with younger people finding it more difficult than older people." A quarter of people say they would not find longer lockdown extremely difficult. That is more likely for older groups.

5/ Seven in ten* of British people support the lockdown: Nine in ten people support the confinement policy, and seven in ten support it strongly.

6/ Vulnerable children are at increased risk: For some children, home is not a safe environment. With schools closed there are new risks for these young people, says Helen Westerman, a safeguarding* expert drafted* to help Childline*. They may be experiencing anxiety and depression, self-harm* and suicidal thoughts. There has been an increase in telephone calls about domestic abuse.

7/ We respond better to the carrot than to the stick: Stephen Reicher has been advising government since the coronavirus outbreak*. The government should not be waving a big stick*. Rather than reprimanding people for not keeping distance in parks, we need to facilitate opening up more green spaces. Creative thinking is needed.

8/ Keeping in touch is crucial*: isolation is bad for you, according to Reicher (a professor in psychology). The physical effects of isolation are roughly equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Creative ways for staying in touch are emerging: from online choirs* to virtual conference calls. It is important no-one has their telephone cut off.

9/ When normal life resumes, we'll need increased mental health support: vulnerable people are those who have suffered from mental health problems, who have been seriously ill, and key workers doing really challenging tasks.

10/ We can't just return to "business as usual": support for recovering from trauma is more important than the trauma. There should be a graded return* to work, or there is a risk of damaging staff*.

11/ When the lockdown lifts, euphoria might be followed by melancholy: there may be initial elation, but it can be followed by a sense of sadness or melancholia. There will be a realisation the world is not the same as before. There may be grief and mourning.

12/ Many of us will come out of this feeling stronger: many people cope well with adversity. There is something called post-traumatic growth. Personal resilience and sense of self-satisfaction are elevated.

**How are we coping?* = comment fait-on face/fait-on avec ; *according to* = selon; *life-threatening illness* = une maladie mortelle; *a loved one* = un être cher; *acute stress* = stress aigu; *stage* = phase, stade; *taking things out on someone* = faire payer quelqu'un; *lockdown* = confinement (to be locked down = être confiné, enfermé); *opinion poll* = un sondage (polling company = société de sondage); *counselling services* = service de conseil; *seven in ten (or seven out of ten)* = sept sur dix...; *self-harm* = automutilation; *safeguard* = sauvegarder; *to draft* = ici, recruter; *Childline* = une ligne d'appel pour enfants; *outbreak* = épidémie, déclenchement; *graded return* = un retour gradué; *staff* = les employés, l'effectif; *to wave a stick* = brandir un bâton; *keeping in touch is crucial* = rester en contact est crucial; *online choirs* = des chœurs en ligne.