

Tips for Returning to Normality

If you had mentioned the word 'lockdown' to us before March 2020, we would have automatically imagined a psychological movie thriller in which a major city, like New York, was put into an emergency lockdown because of a fictional alien virus or because an extremely dangerous criminal was on the loose. Now however, after experiencing multiple nationwide lockdowns, we have a much different image in mind as we are sure you do too.

As the last few remaining restrictions begin to ease, we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. However, for many of us, the easing of restrictions does not spell all sunshine and roses. Instead, it is a point of anxiety and offers a different sort of challenge. And for perfectly valid reasons too! Therefore, as the chaplaincy team, we'd love to share some of our top tips and tricks to help ease anxiety around life after lockdown.

- 1. Let it be** - just like lockdown, the next few months may feel like there are a lot of things out of our control. This of course can be a great cause of fear and anxiety. But it is important to remember that there are lots of things we can manage or plan for. And the things we cannot plan, for we can release into God's loving care. We can believe that God would never lead us in the wrong direction or give us more than we can handle. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."* (Proverbs 3:5-6).
- 2. Mind, Body, Spirit** - in returning to 'normality', or this new sense of normality, it can be easy to forget all the good habits we may have gained during lockdown such as exercising more regularly, going for walks, meditation and prayer and just giving ourselves time to relax and to do nothing. Whatever yours are, it's important to bring these habits with us as we venture forward so that we may make sure our mind, body and spirit are in the best shape as we take these next steps. The YMCA tries to incorporate this model into all of its programs and to empower people to be healthier in spirit, mind and body.
- 3. You are not alone** - One of the most important things to remember, throughout this whole new stage, is that you are not alone. This is a new and different experience for everyone and it is perfectly normal to find life after lockdown scary and overwhelming. But talking to others can help. Talk to a family member, a friend, your God or even our chaplaincy team. We are all here to support one another. *"do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand."* (Isaiah 41:10).