**John’s online tips March 20th**

For many of us IT and technology will be a lifeline during a period when our working and studying patterns will change. It can be quite an adjustment though to do a lot online, and for some of us maybe a bit daunting.

For your college work, keep in touch with your class tutor. Communicate with your tutor on how you are feeling. That’s completely fine, we will expect you to do that. It is all right to feel uncertain and anxious. We are all feeling like that, your studies will provide you with a good focus to work through what we all need to do.

Online material is just a different way to work. Again, engage with your tutor and fellow college instructions. With technology don’t struggle, look for the help from the college. Online is a very flexible way of working and we will use that to assist you completing your studies.

Be kind just now, we are all moving to a new way of working quickly. That will need a bit of patience. We will not always get it right. That’s ok. Let’s work through it together.

Keep in touch with your fellow students and the college for the latest news from them. Also, remember the SWAPWest team are also here to support you, not only currently, but all the time.

Keeping in touch with your fellow students will also be beneficial for you, you all know the pressure that you are feeling and often the best way is a chat with someone who knows what you are going through. Think of different ways to communicate, face to face online chats are good, how about using video calling software, such as Skype, facetime, etc. Make online lunch dates, catch up with a video lunch, soup and sandwich Skype lunch or just a catch up over a coffee online. Use the technology you are comfortable with – speaking on a phone is great.

All of us are feeling anxious, that is natural just now. Let’s think though how we manage that and keep positive. You may have self-care techniques that work for you try and ensure that you have what you need. You may need to think differently for example – doing exercise workouts from videos, try one of [Joe Wicks](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYlRfn6rYQ)’s many at-home workouts. There are hundreds to choose from on his YouTube channel, totally free of charge and tailored for different ages and abilities. There's no need to feel overwhelmed or like you don't know which one to go for. Let us know what you are doing and what works for you.

Exercise is an important tool to staying well, so you can go out for a walk or a run, just be mindful of distances between people. Also, if you have a dog, take it for a walk and if you have a neighbour or relative who cannot leave the house, offer to walk their dog. Remember good hand hygiene will help combat the virus, wash like a nurse: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

Remember, it is not only your hands that need to stay clean, how to clean your smartphone link here; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/technology-51863924/coronavirus-how-to-clean-your-smartphone-safely>

Try to stay connected. Stay in touch with friends on social media, but try not to sensationalise things, if you are sharing content use this from trusted sources, remember other people may be feeling worried as well.

It would be good idea to not immerse yourself into every minute detail of the current coronavirus outbreak. The latest, up to date advice is published by Health Protection Scotland who feed into the UK wide advice, perhaps just visiting their page once a day; rather than spend all your time watching breaking news on TV or online. Too much worrying about “what if” and other negative thoughts can have a detrimental effect on your mood and those around you, family, friends etc. Health Protection Scotland’s latest updates can be found here: <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/wuhan-novel-coronavirus/>

The Young Scot campaign offers useful advice over a wide range of issues, this may be of interest when speaking to your children about their worries over the current situation, it can be accessed here: <https://young.scot/campaigns/national/coronavirus>

It also provides a lot of useful, how to study at home tips. They are for kids but are useful for you as well.

How about trying new hobbies, this will help break up your day and give you a focus away from what is going on and a wee break from your college work. Some things that I have heard other people say they are going to do include learn a new skill; someone wants to learn German, no reason, just wants to add a language skill. Share with us what you want to do.

You tube has opened a whole new way of learning basic skills, such as cooking (although I would suggest recipes that don’t contain pasta, beans and toilet roll just now). Other skills such as playing a musical instrument and small gardening projects are cared for as well. If you don’t have the space for a garden you could grow plants and vegetables at home, even on a windowsill.

It will be so easy to let your mood drop with everything that is going on just now, so we will keep in touch and chat. SWAP is here for you and will work with you to get through your studies.