

## Michelle's Isolation Diary

I am going to be honest about lockdown. I have struggled. I am high risk as I have an auto-immune disease; this has meant I am not allowed to leave my property until 15<sup>th</sup> June. This prevents me taking my daily walks and seeing my boyfriend, friends and family in person until then. That was bad enough but I also then got furloughed. My company explained that work not directly linked to the delivery of goods was all on hold so they have no work for me to cover from home. That was upsetting as I am currently well and wanted to be working but also, I'd already got into a nice rhythm with my home workstation! When I found that out I didn't shower or get dressed for 4 days straight and I barely ate. I did nothing at all except sit on the sofa watching Netflix because I thought "what's the point?" In short, my get up and go had got up and gone!



Thankfully at some point I realised this is a great opportunity to get back doing things I want to do that I enjoy doing. In my 20s I used to dance 6 days a week and did a different type each day but now I'm 40, fat and often busy with work, I've become lazy! Today I got up (late) and scoured the internet to find any online dance I could do. Bingo! My favourite Strictly dancer, Oti Mabuse is doing daily dance classes live streamed to Facebook and one was starting at 11:30am. I ran upstairs and threw my tracksuit on but today, walked past the sofa and headed to the garden with my laptop. Even more fortuitous is that today's dance was to Break Free by Ariana Grande and I love that song. It was a hot and sweaty half an hour but I mastered the dance and was loving being "in a class" again.

I then sent a video of the finished dance to and, hit with the inspiration of reconnecting with things I used to like, I re-started a college course that I signed up to in December but hadn't actually given much time to.

When I then checked my phone and there were loads of messages from friends saying they are glad the old me was back! That made me a tad emotional that they'd spotted the change in me but from that I've scheduled in a Zoom call for our "Scavenger hunt" game tonight. We've played it a few times at Christmas parties and had fun but this will be the first time remotely. Basically, I shout "bring me a..." then shout an object and the first one to grab it and show me gets a point. They will grab it from their houses and show me on Zoom. Fingers crossed it works out!

Today has been great even before the game and it has reminded me I can use this time for me and whatever I want to do rather than what others tell me to or are doing themselves. It was totally selfishly, completely for me and I've loved the "re-charge" it has provided!

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'The Isolation Diaries' was an idea created by Time to Change Northamptonshire Champions with the aim to reduce loneliness and to make others aware it's OK to not be OK during these turbulent times! If you'd like to submit a 'Day in the Life of Isolation' you can send it to either [steph@ketteringmind.org.uk](mailto:steph@ketteringmind.org.uk) or [kizzym@teamworktrust.co.uk](mailto:kizzym@teamworktrust.co.uk) and we will circulate to other Champions. You can also attach photos too!