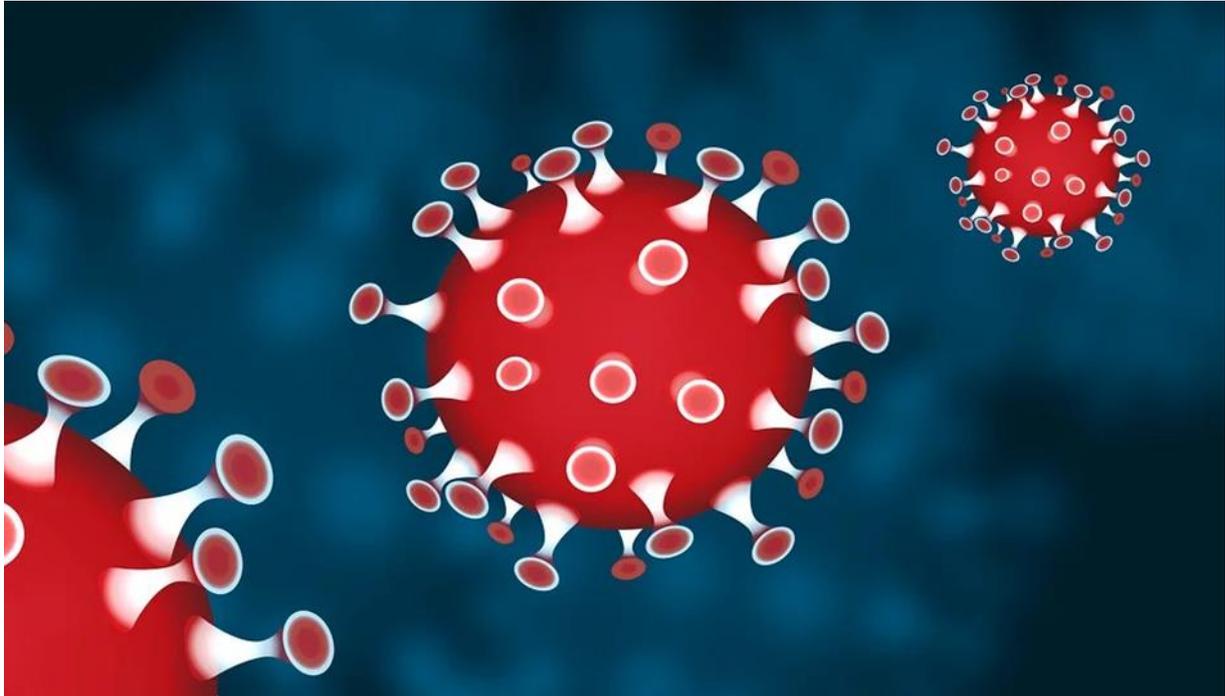


PARLIAMENT STREET

partnership in policy



MINDING THE PANDEMIC – WEEK 3

*Reflection of living in the face of a pandemic and the effects on a regular
citizens mental health*

By Danny Bowman, Head of Campaigns at Parliament Street

Take away from last week

An improved week for my mental health enabled by maintaining a schedule, doing more physical exercise and taking some time out from my work to call my girlfriend and spend time with housemates. This week I need to keep that focus and continue to stay positive and optimistic.

Key and Mood Scoring

<p style="text-align: center;">MOOD SCALE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8 – Ecstatic</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7- Very Happy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6- Moderately Happy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 – Mild Happiness</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 – OK</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3- Mild Unhappiness</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2- Moderately Unhappy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1- Very Unhappy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0- Miserable</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*Lockdown begins</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* Week 2 begins</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* Week 3 begins</p>
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.... Week 3 begins....

6th April 2020

I spent the morning working on my dissertation as part of my new schedule I've put in place to safeguard my mental health during lockdown. I am starting to get used to lockdown life in the knowledge that if I keep a structure, maintain my exercise and stay positive I should be fine. The weather was nice enough to go into my garden to have my morning coffee after doing some work in the house. As I sat in the garden I practiced mindfulness which really helped to reduce my anxiety.

In the afternoon I headed to my social care job walking the pleasant and refreshing two miles between home and work. Whilst on shift news broke of Boris Johnson being in hospital which made me think of how awful it must be for families and friends of people who have been moved into ICU's, but that

thought only encouraged me further to do my small bit in this national effort. The shift flew by, and before I knew it I was on my way home. Streets quiet again tonight, not a person or car in sight!

When I got back I had a quick meal and straight to bed (absolutely shattered!).

Daily scores on mental wellbeing

Morning – 6 (Moderately Happy)

Afternoon – 6 (Moderately Happy)

Evening – 5 (Mild Happiness)

7th April 2020

Up early this morning for the Staff Student Forum which is now weekly due to the coronavirus situation. I felt like the meeting went well today with some great questions from students and some equally great answers from staff. I'm starting to get used to using Zoom, seems weird having meetings online, but today was hugely successful I thought.

I felt a bit anxious in the afternoon, same old worries about my parents and sisters, but learning how to make sure I channel that into something productive. I decided to keep going with my work, getting lots done, but didn't help my anxiety as much as I thought it would.

By the evening I just wanted to stay in my room, as much as I wanted to engage with my housemates I was starting to feel quite claustrophobic and just wanted my own space. My housemates are wonderful, but it can be hard for everyone when you are stuck in one place for long periods of time with six people. It was nice to have a phone call with my girlfriend before bed, lifted my spirits slightly talking about life after lockdown.

Daily scores on mental wellbeing

Morning – 7 (Very Happy)

Afternoon – 4 (OK)

Evening – 5 (Mild Happiness)

8th April 2020

I felt quite refreshed waking up this morning after a good 8 hours sleep, getting up to find my housemate Megan had kindly made her coffee machine communal. It's these small acts of kindness during difficult periods of time that make the world of difference. This really raised my mood and helped me remain focused for most of the morning (maybe it was the coffee?).

Most of the afternoon was spent working at my desk putting the last bit of information on one of the chapters of my dissertation before going to spend some time with housemates. Not very eventful, but a productive day!

Daily scores on mental wellbeing

Morning – 6 (Moderately Happy)

Afternoon – 6 (Moderately Happy)

Evening – 6 (Moderately Happy)

9th April 2020

I found myself feeling a little bit flat this morning trying to get the motivation to make progress on my work. It took a little longer than usual, but I was up and ready to go once I had a coffee and some toast. The lockdown seems to be making me more sluggish, but it's important to keep myself going for my mental health.

In the afternoon I decided to have some time off work, sitting in the garden reading a book. Trying to relax a little bit and sway from the work schedule slightly for my mental health. It was a strange version of an afternoon off; usually I would be heading into town, grabbing a coffee and meeting friends. The lockdown version was very different, sitting in the garden with a book before heading in to watch some Amazon Prime.

I went for a short jog this evening to clear my head which was incredibly useful for my anxiety, but it was balanced out slightly by the anxiety of jogging on the streets, worried that I would come within two metres of someone. Once back, myself and my housemates watched some television before heading out into the street to clap our wonderful NHS and key workers. If it is helping to make NHS workers and my colleagues in social care jobs easier, then staying in makes this lockdown worth it! They are reason enough to stay safe and stay home.

Daily scores on mental wellbeing

Morning – 5 (Mild Happiness)

Afternoon – 6 (Moderately Happy)

Evening – 6 (Moderately Happy)

10th April 2020

Woke up early this morning and got straight into doing my dissertation work with a coffee by my side. Really missing my family and girlfriend today, but everyone is in the same boat! Yet again by sticking to a work schedule my mood was stabilised, although I feel I need to diversify my schedule a little more.

Its strange working at home, thinking of the days I would go to the university library, or the study room in the department. I will have to get used to working in my room for the foreseeable future.

The weather outside lifted my spirits with the sun coming through the window. I went outside into the garden in my breaks which made the world of difference for my mood. Even if I couldn't do the things I would normally do on bank holidays such as seeing my girlfriend or catching up with family. I was making the best of the situation spending time with my substitute family, my housemates.

Weekends like this remind you of the seriousness of the situation and can be difficult for many. At the back of my mind I just wanted to be in the garden at my parent's house in Northumberland catching up and enjoying the sun, but that's not possible right now. For now, it's all about making the best out of a bad situation.

Daily scores on mental wellbeing

Morning – 4 (OK)

Afternoon – 5 (Mild Happiness)

Evening – 5 (Mild Happiness)

11th April 2020

Early 5am start this morning to get ready for a longer shift at my social care job. I am feeling relatively optimistic this morning about things, whilst walking to work I caught a lovely glimpse of sunrise which really lifted my mood. For all these times are difficult, there are moments like this that enable you to maintain your optimism.

It was another good shift; with the people I work with yet again showing amazing compassion and resolve in this difficult time. When I arrived home, I spent some time with housemates watching television, chatting and laughing. I'm lucky to live with people, having that human contact has been immensely useful in keeping my mood stable. It was also great to speak with my girlfriend afterwards, enjoying a further increase in my mood

Morning – 6 (Moderately Happy)

Afternoon – 6 (Moderately Happy)

Evening – 7 (Very Happy)

12th April 2020

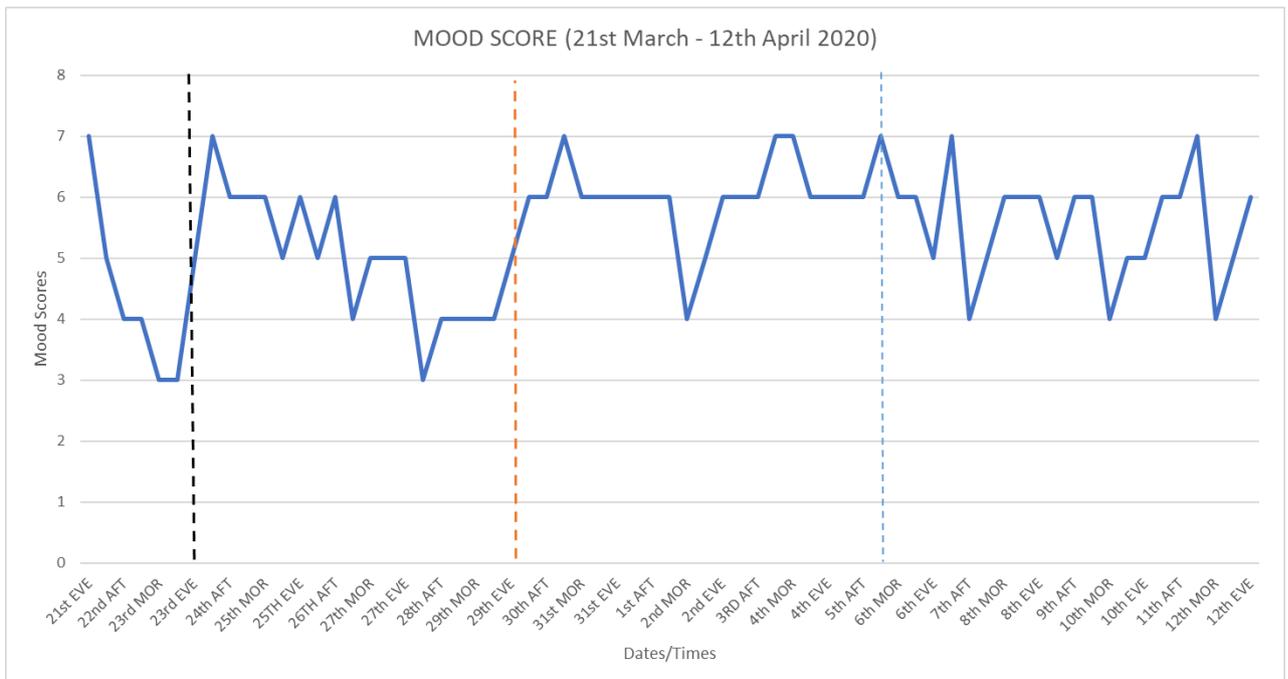
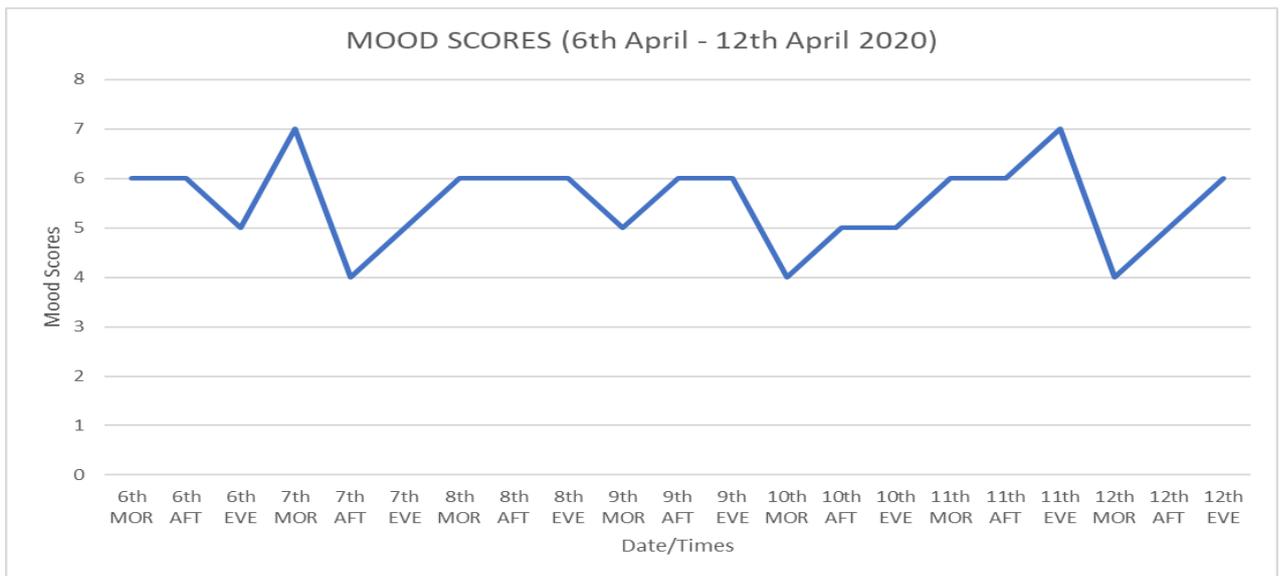
I had a relaxing Easter Sunday somewhat trying to replicate what I would normally do; have a lie in, and call family members and girlfriend. Mixed feelings though, half of me feeling down about not being able to see family and other loved ones in person, but the other half feeling blessed that at least we have

the technology to Facetime each other. Today will be a hard day for everyone across the country, but we must take comfort in the knowledge that we will get through this and have many Easters to come because of the distancing we have today. It is only natural that my mood will be up and down more than other days, but tomorrow will be better. Also, chocolate helped!

Morning – 4 (OK)

Afternoon – 5 (Mild Happiness)

Evening – 6 (Moderately Happy)



WEEK 1 AVERAGE MOOD SCORE – 4.9 (Rounded Up – Mild Happiness)

WEEK 2 AVERAGE MOOD SCORE – 6.6 (Rounded Up – Very Happy)

WEEK 3 AVERAGE MOOD SCORE – 5.5 (Rounded Up – Moderately Happy)

OVERALL AVERAGE MOOD SCORE (SO FAR) – 5.4 (Rounded Up – Mild Happiness)