**Living well on the bumpy road of life.**

Most of us are creatures of habit and like things to go as planned. This helps us to feel in control of things. The last 16 months (yes, it has been that long!) has probably been the most uncertain of times that we will live through in a generation. It has challenged us all in so many different ways, and for many of us, it has increased our stress and has left us exhausted and feeling like many aspects of our lives are out of our control. The road of life has been bumpy and has had several twists and turns - with each new change of circumstance we have had to adapt to a new situation. It has also had a few potholes - the road of life has been bumpy, and for some it has perhaps forced us to stop in our tracks and tend to a puncture. Living with the uncertainty about what might be around the next corner is hard.

Here are some top tips that can help you to cope with the uncertain road of life ahead:

1. Be kind to yourself - some people are better at dealing with uncertainty. Don’t beat yourself up if your tolerance for unpredictability is lower than a friend’s. Try not to say unkind or critical things to yourself, and only say the sorts of kind things to yourself that you’d say to a friend. Treat yourself with the same kindness as you treat your friends.

2. Reflect on past successes - it highly likely that you’ve overcome other bumps in the road in the past, and you have survived them. Give yourself some credit for your past successes and draw on the great things you did to get through the bumps in the road.

3. Limit exposure to the news - most of the news on TV, in the papers and on social media is bad news. Rarely is there a lovely story about fluffy bunny rabbits! If the news makes you feel more stressed, avoid it, and limit your exposure to it.

4. Avoid dwelling on things you can’t control - when uncertainty comes our way, and the road ahead is foggy, try not to imagine the worst case scenario. Try not to ruminate on the negative.

5. Take your own advice - ask yourself: if a friend came to me with this worry, what advice would I give? Imagining the bumpy road from the outside can help to show a new perspective and route ahead, and kinder advice.

6. Engage in self-care - try not to let the potholes in the road of life to cause you to have a puncture or to send you down an unhealthy road. Make an effort to do the basics of eating well, getting some exercise, getting enough sleep and talking to friends.

7. Control what you can - focus on the things that are within your control and stick to routines, as this structure can provide comfort and security. Simple things like meal planning can help.

8. Ask for help and seek support from those you trust - if you having difficulty managing the bumpy road of life, it is OK to take care of yourself and seek support. The Somerset Emotional Wellbeing Service is here for you. [www.somersetemotionalwellbeing.org](http://www.somersetemotionalwellbeing.org)

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