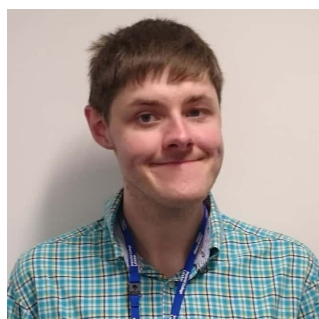


Supporting Each Other and Ensuring Wellbeing During the Pandemic



As battery researchers, most of us aren't on the front line of fighting Covid-19, but there's still a lot we can do to make this less awful for everyone, and potentially save lives.



Simon O'Kane, Faraday Institution Research Fellow at Imperial College London, and member of the organisation's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group provides his personal view...

Self-care

Looking after ourselves enables us to be fit to help others.

In the UK we are allowed outside for daily exercise and to absorb sunlight to make vitamin D whilst staying more than two metres away from other people. [UK government guidance](#).

Exercising indoors also offers an opportunity to stay active. Expensive gym equipment isn't required; lifting heavy bottles for example works just as well.

Keeping in touch with your work colleagues is beneficial. Embrace online working and attend online training such as the [Faraday Masterclass](#) every Wednesday at 14:00.

[Check out 5 ways to protect your mental health](#) written by the Smart Girl Tribe.

Check in on Friends and Family

The pandemic affects everyone in different ways. Some are lonely and struggling with isolation. Some have lost loved ones, or know someone in intensive care. Some have lost their jobs and businesses. Some have mental health conditions made worse by the pandemic. Take the opportunity to ask everyone closest to you how they're coping and let them know you care.

I've done this in different ways: calling some friends on the phone, messaging other friends, sending more letters to Grandma than usual and video calling my aunt once a week. Other friends have gone further, arranging virtual games, virtual birthday parties (yes, it works!) and here at Imperial College we've done our first virtual choir recording!

Just remember to [#AskTwice](#)

Donate to a Good Cause

As university researchers, most of us are fortunate enough to be able to work from home. Many others have had their pay cut, been laid off, or are in businesses facing collapse. More people than usual are going to rely on food banks and other charities.

If you're lucky enough to be saving money by not travelling and not eating out, why not consider giving more money than usual to charity.

I'm saving around £30 per week by not using the London Underground, so I'm donating that amount to Wandsworth Foodbank. If you can't give money, how about giving some time by doing shopping for people who cannot leave their homes?

These Challenges Aren't New

Here in Britain, we often talk about the "Blitz spirit" as a reminder that the country has faced worse things in the past. But this isn't the best analogy and doesn't have the same relevance to people from outside Britain. I wanted to talk about something else.

I have a friend with chronic pain disorder. When the pain is at its worst, she has to go into self-isolation for a week, just like people with Covid-19 symptoms are having to do. She's taken up a whole range of activities to help her get through these periods, and has a support network in place to run errands for her. Likewise, she runs errands for other people when she's feeling better.

Many people are having to cope with enormous changes to their routines. Autistic people like me have struggled with routine change all our lives, and we've had to develop ways of coping. These are different for each person.

Many people are terrified for the future. People with anxiety disorders feel like this all the time, and have again had to develop their own coping strategies to keep them grounded in the here and now. Something a lot of them have said to me is, "take things one day at a time."

Hope

The reason I hadn't written this sooner is because I too am terrified about the future. If I think about it for too long, my head starts feeling like a lump of lead got inside it. Mostly I try not to think about it and just take one day at a time, like my friends suggest.

But we all need some hope. The need for better batteries isn't going to disappear because there's been a crisis. And some things will get better. They will have to, if we're going to make it through this. We all have to learn to take better care of ourselves and each other. I hope we will also learn more compassion for the vulnerable, and the disabled community who showed us how to get through this.

If you do all of these things, you could really make a difference to someone's life during this difficult time. I leave you with a message from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II: "[We will meet again.](#)"

About the Faraday Institution EDI Working Group

The Faraday Institution aspires to create a truly inclusive environment where all its researchers can thrive and feel a sense of belonging whilst empowering everyone to have a voice. We celebrate individuality and know that combining the skills and talents of a dynamic and diverse community brings great strength. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, headed up by CFO Susan Robertson, is looking at positive ways to ensure these values are lived out throughout our community.

If you would like to raise an issue with the EDI Working Group or write an EDI blog, please contact [Susan Robertson](#) or [Fran Long](#).

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