

Maintaining our Mental Health during Quarantine

Social isolation is a common and valid concern as we head into what could be several weeks of limited access to our normal routine and in-person interaction with other people. Some may take social distancing in stride, but for most, it's causing high degree of anxiety and anticipated loneliness. To help you relieve some of this apprehension, here are some ways to prepare and manage in order to reduce the negative emotional impact for yourself and for others.

Mentally Prepare

How you think about a quarantine is vital. The terms we use to describe the situation sets the emotional tone for how we feel about it. If we think in terms of what we're being *forced* to do and what we *won't* have access to, it creates a sense of lack and powerlessness. Anxiety and panic can start to creep in, not to mention boredom and apathy. Combine that with a lot of uncertainty and endlessly dire newsfeed, and you have a recipe for mental health disaster.

However, if we can stay focused on the things that we still *can* do and what we still *do* have, while creating a basic structure for our days that resembles our old routine, we can mitigate feelings of anxiety and depression and get through these next weeks successfully, maybe even happily.

Here are a few tips to get you started:

Accentuate the positives: Focus on what you *are* able to do during this time. You're finally home: organize your storage room or cupboards, read that book you want to finish but left aside, rest, cook a complicate recipe, spend time with your pet(s) and play. Take advantage of the time this provides for all the things you said "maybe later" due to the heavy loaded routine.

Don't overload on news: Identify where you get your news and check in once or twice a day. Staying constantly connected to the unfolding news won't be helpful and make sure your news sources are reliable.

It won't last forever: Remember, this contagion will end. New stories, open-ended developments, and the unknown are anxiety provoking for sure, but be mindful that this outbreak won't last forever.

Organize Yourself and Your Tribe

Get prepared. Planning your actions is a great tool for anxiety, and is essential. This time is fraught with unknowns and tension, but identifying actionable tasks can help empower you tremendously. It gives intention and focus to an open-ended situation *and* sets you up to deal with the tumult of the outbreak.

Here are a few ways that you can act and gain a sense of agency.

Set a schedule: Keeping a daily rhythm helps manage the day productively. Even small items such as eating around the same time as usual, and dedicating time to play, work, and rest, can work wonders.

Be social, virtually: Create a virtual schedule with friends and colleagues. Real time office banter, coffee and dinner dates aren't advised, but virtual ones can work just as well. Don't leave yourself out of the loop — be intentional with your connections now, call your cousin in the States, or a friend who studies abroad, or a long relative in Australia. Scheduling a virtual meet-up at least once a day can make all the difference as you negotiate the long hours alone.

Create a journal of gratefulness: Help yourselves by journaling and recording things/activities that you felt grateful for, added personal meaning to your day, boosted your mood, or enriched your life. "Today we did Zumba through CUT'S sport office virtual program", or "I enjoyed a cup of hot cocoa".

Stay busy: 10 ways on how to do so below

Listen to a variety of musical combination and genres <https://www.kasetophono.com/>
- <https://www.spotify.com/>

Do crosswords, sudoku, puzzles <https://isbooth.com/>

Παίξτε σκάκι <https://www.chess.com/el/play/computer>

Μαγειρέψτε <https://akispetretzikis.com/en>

Meditate

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jyy0ra2WcQQ&list=RD6p_yaNFSYao&index=2

Spay day: Facial and hair masks, skin rejuvenation/peeling/hydration, manicure, pedicure, long bath with essential oils. Let your imagination create your ideal environment. We help you with the music <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zlgya1ADwas> (Lofihop), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWcVx-jUjAw> (Bossa nova guitar), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZbuj3RJcjl> (Asian Zen meditation)

Gardening: Take care of your plants, so that they take care of you

Movie and Pop Corn: <https://www.netflix.com/cy/browse/genre/34399>

EBOOKS: <https://www.blinkist.com/>

Podcasts: spotify, youtube, Iphone app Podcasts

And...

Enjoying the sunset with some tea under candlelight-no website available 😊