

Ideas on Coping with Social Distancing:

Staying physically away from people does not mean that you have to totally isolate yourself. Instead you can telephone, text or use social media to keep in touch with friends and family. Make time to contact those friends and family outside your home, regularly.

Share your worries with a trusted friend - bottling up worries and pretending to be positive all the time will not help in the long run.



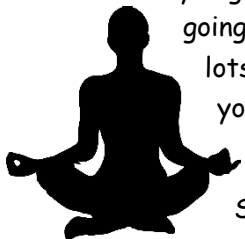
Use the hour a day exercise if you are able to do so. Ideally go for a walk in the fresh air, maintaining a safe two metre distance from those from outside your household. If you are unable to leave your home, think about opening some windows to let fresh air in and then doing some exercise in your home (walking up and down the stairs, housework, dancing to your favourite music, gardening if you have a garden, yoga, etc.) If you are remaining at home you can split your exercise regime into two 30 minute or four 15 minute bursts. Use this time to cultivate skills and hobbies you don't normally have time for.

Try to eat a healthy diet that include fruit and vegetables (fresh, frozen or canned.) Boredom and stress can lead to over eating or binge eating - avoid this by planning your meals and keeping busy. If you do overeat don't be too hard on yourself- draw a line underneath it and move on - make better choices next mealtime. Try to identify what led you to overeat in the first place.



Before shopping, make a meal plan for the week (now may be a good time to try new recipes!) and check your food stores to see what you actually need to buy to make the dishes you've planned. This will save you money and avoid panic buying.

Make sure you get lots of sleep! Avoid too much caffeine or alcohol before bed. Do something relaxing before going to bed. Have a shower or bath, read a book, listen to relaxing music, try meditation. There are lots of Apps to help with this, such as Headspace and Calm. Practice a device curfew - don't use your phones or devices for at least an hour before sleep (unless using sleep and relaxation apps which have cut-out timers and no "blue" background lighting.)



Stay informed with what is going on in the world but make sure you take regular breaks from watching TV and listening to the news, which can be overwhelming and frightening at times. Try to access your news from the TV or the radio, not social media - which can be full of "fake news" stories and misinformation. Consider carefully what news and websites your children are being exposed to.

In this ever changing time it may help to try to keep to a routine where you can - and to regain some control in you and your families daily life. Get up and go to bed at regular times, take some form of exercise at the same time each day, plan regular mealtimes and activities, and don't forget to schedule in some fun too!

None of what is happening at the moment is normal, and so it's okay to acknowledge your negative feelings too - we all have them! You may be feeling worried about yourself, your family and friends, feeling helpless, anxious, sad, frustrated and annoyed. All of these feelings are okay. Notice, accept and acknowledge how you feel and share your feelings, if you can, with someone you trust.

Remember, these tough times will end. Our lives may change as a result of what's happening now, but we are adaptable and resilient. You do have the strength to get through this. Take care of yourself first, so that you can then take care of your families. You can still laugh and find enjoyment out of life even when bad things are happening.



Take care and stay safe everyone until we are all together again.