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Managing Your Mood and Emotions While Observing Social Distancing

It is often difficult to manage your mood and reduce your stress level while adhering to social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

You Should Know

The coronavirus pandemic has undoubtedly caused major disruptions in your life. If you normally relieve stress by going to the gym, shopping at the mall, or getting together with friends, you might feel isolated and lonely while adhering to social distancing.

Without access to your usual coping tools, it might be more difficult to manage stress and control your mood while experiencing sometimes high levels of distress.

Social distancing is counter intuitive to your basic need for connections with other people. This connection not only soothes your nervous system, but also strengthens your body's defenses to stress.

The forced separation due to the COVID-19 pandemic might increase your distress and anxiety as you become more focused on yourself and perceived 'threats' around you.

Here are suggestions to track your moods and cope with them in positive ways during social distancing.

Please contact a therapist or physician if your distress is interfering with daily functioning.

What to Do

There are number of things you can do to cope with stress and manage your moods and emotions in healthy ways while observing social distancing.

Begin by organizing your day into time blocks of work, virtual/electronic social connecting, fun activities, and rest and relaxation.

Reach Out

- Connect with friends and family by phone or email.
- Share your concerns and feelings with people you trust.
- Use Face Time to have a video chat with a group of friends or family.
- Play board games with your children.
- Play with your pet.
- Commit to at least one phone call, email, or text per day.

Physical Activity

- Many gyms are offering free virtual fitness coaching and exercise videos.
- Stream a fitness video on YouTube.
- Go for a walk or jog.
- Lift hand weights or soup cans.
- Practice deep breathing or meditation, using an app or online video.

Express Your Creativity

- Journal, write poetry, or express yourself through arts or crafts.
- Cook a healthy meal or a special treat.
- Take an online class or watch an instructional video.
- Attend free online virtual museum tours, free live streams of concerts (including the Metropolitan Opera), and other entertainment.
- Catch up on all those magazines and books you want to read.

Start a Project

- Complete something you've been putting off.
- Reorganize the basement, attic, garage or storage area.
- Paint a room, clean out the closets, rearrange the kitchen cabinets.
- Finish a do-it-yourself home repair project.

Observe Your Spirituality

- Attend services at houses of worship via streaming services and online videos.
- View free classes on mindfulness and meditation through Kripalu, Shambhala Mountain Center, and other retreat centers' websites.
- Practice Yoga
- Participate in an online prayer or Bible Study group
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Adapted from Between Sessions Resource