

How to deal with social isolation during quarantine?

The current situation of Coronavirus is having a great impact in every individual's lives and changing what we all used to have as normal daily routines. This period of time can represent a big challenge for most of people all over the world. Therefore this is a very important time to be resilient, compassionate and supportive to each other, use all kind of strategies and coping mechanisms, so everyone is able to overcome this difficult time in the best way possible.

Here is a list of suggestions that can help you go through this stage, maintaining your mental health:

1. Filtering the news

Try not to spend too much time reading the news or updating yourself about numbers related with the disease. This can be overwhelming within time and can generate unnecessary anxiety and panic about the situation. Also there are a number of facts circulating on social media that could not be accurate to the actual reality.

Set a specific moment of your day to keep yourself informed by selecting a trustful source of information. Make sure that moment don't have a negative impact on you. If necessary, share your views with someone you trust (family or friends), this can be reinsuring and containing of any worries that can come from those news.

2. Stablish a meaningful, pleasant and balanced routine

Think about and plan a routine that could be effective and fulfilled for this period of time. The purpose of this is to dedicate yourself to different tasks that could allow you to have a balanced routine

as possible, which can facilitate your day to day, helps you feel productive and fulfilled with a range of things. This can also help you to link with positive activities to help you keep your mood stable between eventual difficult days you may face along this stage.

Not having a structured routine in a long-term can lead you to feel depressed, anxious and over-preoccupied and consequently affect your mental health (generating irrational thoughts, negative assumptions, disrupting your sleep, affecting your eating pattern and mood).

Taking advantage of your free time on a positive way:

- Set a time to practice physical exercise
(There are many options of videos and online programs that you can follow on YouTube Facebook or google, orientated by personal trainers and qualified professionals to help you keep fit, explore the options of exercises that you feel more interested: yoga, Pilates, cardio, gymnastics, walks).
It can also help diffusing signs of anxiety or tension from your body, helps you relax and it can stimulate you to practice exercise join with other family members or housemates, contributing for a good moment for all.
For those who can have a garden, use your outside space as much as possible. For those that don't have that option, be creative and practice exercise indoors (link with programs on your TV).
- Set a timetable with reasonable slots to complete work tasks/duties for every week
Don't forget to alternate this slots with break times for eat, exercise, leisure activities (movies, TV shows, music) and socialise with friends.

For those who don't have many work tasks to get busy, explore options of courses online or workshops for self-development of skills and talents, improve your knowledges in areas of your interest. This could help giving you a purpose to achieve goals for every week per example. It can also help you feel self-realised with the thigs you are setting for yourself, building your self-confidence and stimulating your brain in a positive and productive way.

3. Keep social interaction as much as possible, but respecting the current government recommendations

You have many options to keep your social interaction on-going with friends and family, even during quarantine (phone, video, skype, facetime, group chats on WhatsApp).

Make sure you keep a regular connection with people that are important for you (you can set a slot in your day to interact with your friends on social media – chat, play games and share experiences of your activities using your electronic devices). This will help you not feeling depressed, sad, isolated or lonely during quarantine. This could be a way of supporting and motivating each other and working on compassion and resilience to overcome this period together. If you have a pet (cat, dog or other), enjoy time playing with your pet, they can be important and loyal partners in your days.

4. Take care of your self

Taking care of yourself is important to keep you on a balance state, self-esteem and self-confidence (sleep properly, eat healthy, cook your own meals and explore different recipes, practice meditation - mindfulness, relaxation, engage in doing things you enjoy, be creative and stimulate your imagination).

Take advantage of your time to do things you like and that you didn't have time before. Be happy and grateful by being able to do those things and praise the effort you are doing on your own behalf.

This could keep you motivated and can motivate others around you as well.

5. Spend quality time with your family

This could be a good timing for families to improve their relationships and to support each other, to work together as team to overcome this period of time on a more positive and calming way for all of you.

Create moments of fun and joy, laugh together, work together, and share experiences (play board games, be creative in entertaining each other, learn and study together, set times to share thoughts and feelings and to understand each other, identify the positives of your day together, share your hopes and dreams, create a positivity diary with notes, photos or important things you do together during quarantine).

This can be incredibly motivating and important to bring every family member more close to each other. Creating good and positive memories for all of you can be just priceless!

Example of a structured timetable

8:00	Breakfast, getting ready for the day
9:30	Physical Exercise and bath/shower
11:00	Mid-morning Snack and drink Work tasks/duties
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch
14:30	Family time/games
16:00	Social time with friends
17:00	Mid-afternoon Snack and drink Reading/free time activities
18:30	Movie/documentary/TV show
20:00 – 21:00	Dinner
21:30	Meditation- mindfulness/relaxation
22:30	Bed time

Create your own timetable according with your preferences and life style. Repeat the things that are working well with you every week and make adjustments of the things that are not working so well, you can do weekly reviews of you plan and about the things you want to vary in your routines.

Keep hopeful and positive and make sure you smile every day 😊