

COVID -19

Coping with social distancing, self-isolation or quarantine

As we enter an unknown period of social distancing, self-isolation or quarantine it is normal that you may feel overwhelmed or frustrated. Being asked to isolate can sometimes make us feel like we have lost control of our daily lives. We face challenges such as being separated from loved ones, losing our sense of freedom and reduced income. All of which can lead people to experience a range of emotions.

Keep in touch

Maintaining our social connections with family and friends is fundamental to mental health and wellbeing. While we are currently limited to being in physical proximity to loved ones, it can be helpful to connect with family and friends via phone or online.

Family & Friends

Make regular contact to check-in with loved ones. If you are concerned for an older or vulnerable family member, discuss and make a plan on the best way to support them. This may include managing home visits to minimize risk of infection, putting hygiene practices in place or placing supermarket delivery orders.

Colleagues

Be sure to check in on colleagues regularly. Stay active on messenger and increase utilization of video chat. Being able to see the faces of co-workers will give the feeling that everyone is still connected.

Even if you don't have a specific question to ask, still catch up regularly, just as you would in the workplace. We recommend daily team meetings, being sure to check-in on one another and discuss non work-related topics as well.

Neighbours

While respecting social distance, consider introducing yourself to your neighbours. Check in with them, enquire if they need extra support and suggest swapping phone numbers to keep in contact over coming weeks.

Maintain a daily routine

Structure a daily schedule around your normal mealtimes and sleeping times. During a period of isolation having a routine can bring back a sense of normalcy to your life. Maintain a balance of fun activities, household responsibilities and work.

Working from home

While Australia takes further steps to minimise the spread of COVID-19, many workplaces are transitioning employees to a home office environment. This can understandably be a stressful time as an employee as we balance concern for the wellbeing of family and friends while also meeting normal workload and responsibilities.

- **Maintain your routine** – follow your habits of a regular working day. Avoid sleeping in, shower and dress as if you were going to the office, take normal breaks and stick to regular eating times.
- **Keep in touch with colleagues** – stay active on messenger platforms, increase utilization of video chat. Even if you don't have a specific item to discuss, still check in regularly just as you would do in an office.
- **Set up a comfortable and dedicated workspace away from noise and distractions.**
- **Don't fill extra time with more work** – maintain normal working hours. Create time boundaries and use the extra time you would spend on your commute to prepare yourself for the day.
- **Take a break** – take 5-10-minute breaks throughout the day. Use this time to take a conscious step away from the computer. If safe to do so, walk the dog or spend lunch in an open outside space.

Create a positive home environment

Many of us will be required to self-isolate with other members of our household. While this provides opportunities for social connection, this may cause arguments or strain on relationships. Consider steps that you can take to minimise conflict with the people around you.

The Australian Psychological Society recommends:

- Creating a roster to help you distribute chores equally and fairly.
- Identifying and taking part in activities you like doing together such as movies, board games, jigsaws and gardening.
- Sharing positive emotions and experiences, rather

than anger, frustration and disappointment.

- Communicating about your worries and concerns and seeking support from one another.
- Maintaining your sense of fun and positive humour.
- Remaining respectful of each other in times of conflict – walk away and take time to calm yourselves, returning to the discussion later and repairing the hurt caused.

Maintaining a positive outlook

Be mindful to maintain a positive outlook during this period of uncertainty and possible isolation.

- Keep in mind that the current circumstances are only temporary.
- Rather than concentrate on the negative aspects of self-isolation, remember that staying home is ultimately having a positive impact on the community. People are working together to minimise the spread of the virus and protect the lives of vulnerable people.
- Limit your exposure to social media and breaking news.
- Engage in activities that occupy your mind and bring you joy – e.g. reading, gardening, exercising.

If you are worried you may have come into contact with COVID-19 please call the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 – open 24 hours, 7 days a week.

If you are finding that your wellbeing and everyday functioning is being disrupted by anxiety and thoughts of COVID-19 please consider seeking support from a mental health professional.

**To arrange an appointment today
please call us on**

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