

DISTANCE & RELATIONSHIPS

Tips on how to manage relationships in a time of social distancing and self-isolation.

1. Adjust your expectations of yourself. You're in the midst of a pandemic and you're adapting to something you've never experienced before.
2. Extend this understanding to those you're in relationship with. Most of us are feeling more anxious, irritable and frustrated. Try practicing kindness and patience.
3. Remember we all have different coping mechanisms when faced with intense stress. Some of us will reach for a project to anchor us down in an effort to feel less powerless. Others might respond more emotionally and want to communicate their feelings. What is helpful for us to remember, is that what promotes these responses are the same underlying feelings.
4. Take some deep breaths when you're feeling frustrated with your loved ones. You might even have a code word that signifies that it's time to have a break. Excuse yourself and step away from the conversation if needed so you can re-centre yourself. Just make sure you return to finish the exchange once you are feeling more grounded.
5. Surprises go a long way. Send your loved ones a funny card, a letter or a sweet treat to put a smile on their face. It also means they have something physical to remind them of you.
6. Focus on the quality of your conversations vs the quantity.
7. Reframe how you and your loved ones are thinking about being apart. It can help to focus on how the distance might strengthen your relationships in the long run.
8. Out of sight does not mean out of mind! If you're worried about the effects of physical distancing on your relationship, it can be helpful to talk about what works within your relationship to keep feeling connected.
9. Physical distance also makes physical intimacy very difficult! Explore alternative and fun ways to remain intimate.
10. If you're missing the social contact you usually get through a club or sporting team, organise to catch up and connect virtually once a week. Consider starting an online sporting team such as fantasy football.
11. Set up a virtual family dinner, dance party with friends, or schedule a dedicated date night.
12. If you're feeling over-stimulated by the social efforts of those around you, keep in mind it is ok to take a step back. Just make sure you tell your social network so they know that everything is ok.