

MENTAL WELLNESS BASICS



Promoting Mental Wellness During COVID-19

As a society, we are currently in the middle of something completely new. Schools are closing, businesses are limiting hours, and time can feel like it is standing still as we retreat to our homes for distance and safety. Times like this can be a test of both our physical and mental health, and it is more important than ever that we pay attention to each. The following tips are designed to support you in doing just that.

1. Keep a routine

One of the often overlooked benefits of being in school is the structure that it provides. If your school is closed, chances are you'll be presented with the opportunity to be much more independent-- which can be a good thing, but can also pose challenges of its own. Routines can be incredibly beneficial for our mental health-- they allow us to know what to expect from each day, they provide structure, and they help keep us accountable and goal-focused. As much as possible during any time off from school, keep a routine.

This includes getting dressed; eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner; spending time moving around; and focusing your attention on a variety of different things. As tempting as it is to lounge in your PJ's in front of the computer or TV all day, too much lounging may actually have a negative impact on your well-being. Attempt to seek out a balance: try writing down your typical school day schedule, and attempt to recreate it at home. Also make sure to build in time for breaks, movement, and meals!

2. Seek out positive news

When something like coronavirus hits the world, it can be easy to become overwhelmed with the amount of information that is being presented about it. Social media can make us feel even more overwhelmed because we see and hear the same information over and over again, making it feel amplified. If you find that you're feeling anxious or upset about the current state of affairs, make the decision to actively seek out some positive news. Look up some videos of puppies or kittens playing, watch something that makes you laugh, or read about all of the good things that are happening in the world in light of the challenges. While you can't control what is happening in the world around you, you can control how you choose to spend your time.

3. Maintain social connections

Just because we are practicing social distancing doesn't mean we have to completely isolate. The wonderful thing about technology is that it allows us to maintain connections with people without having to be in the same room as them. Now, more than ever, it is important to maintain connections. Call or FaceTime a friend, send them a funny video or meme, check in on someone to make sure that they are doing okay, and keep your group texts going. The more we can meaningfully connect with others, the less alone we'll feel.

4. Focus on self-growth

One benefit to not having to go to school is that you may have some extra time to focus on other things. Consider making one of those things your personal growth! This could be a great time to start a positive habit, learn a new skill (YouTube has some great and free tutorials for all kinds of things!), or tackle a project that you've been putting off.

5. Prioritize wellness

Times like these often make us very aware of our physical health, and steps that we can take to strengthen it. In addition to doing all of the things that we are "supposed" to do: washing our hands, staying indoors when we are sick, getting enough rest; we should also consider the things that we need to do to stay mentally well. This may include practicing self-compassion, enlisting coping strategies when things feel overwhelming, sharing our feelings with those we trust, and other things to prioritize our mental health.

Resources:

We are living in times that can feel overwhelming and scary, and your physical and mental health are the top priorities. If you feel like you'd benefit from someone to talk to, or if you're having any thoughts of self-harm or suicide, please read or reach out to one of the resources below. The world needs you here.

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

The Trevor Project (for LGBTQ Youth): 1-866-488-7386

[CDC: Managing Stress and Anxiety During COVID-19](#)

[Science Based Strategies to Cope With Coronavirus Anxiety](#)