

Live Well, Work Well

MAINTAINING MENTAL WELLBEING DURING A QUARANTINE

In response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization have recommended that individuals who may have been exposed to the disease self-quarantine at home for 14 days. In addition, public health officials are recommending that healthy individuals practice social distancing, staying at home to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Following the advice of public health officials can help stop the spread of COVID-19, but can certainly do a number on your mental wellbeing. If you're self-quarantining or practicing social distancing, keep the following tips in mind to maintain your mental wellbeing.

Maintain a Routine

One of the best things that you can do to preserve your mental wellbeing is to stick to a routine. For example, if you're used to going to the gym before work, try to wake up early and get an at-home workout in before you start your day. Maintaining as much normalcy as possible with your daily routine can help keep your mood as lifted as possible, and prevent boredom and distress from taking over.

If you have children at home, do your best to create a routine for them. Whether they

are practicing virtual learning through school or focused on learning life skills, try to implement a structured schedule for them so they know what your expectations are. Try to limit as much screen time as possible and incorporate learning activities throughout the day.

Get a Good Night's Sleep

This suggestion goes hand-in-hand with sticking to a routine. While you're at home, it can be easy to go to bed or sleep in later than you typically would. Breaking your normal sleep routine can have negative effects on your overall mental wellbeing, so try to stick to your typical schedule as much as possible.

Spend Time Outside

Unless health officials give you explicit instructions to stay in your home no matter what, try to get outside periodically throughout the day. This could involve going out in your backyard or taking a walk around the block, but try to avoid large groups of people.

Being outside also helps to promote higher vitamin D levels, a vitamin the body makes when skin is directly exposed to the sun. Many people are deficient in vitamin D, so exercising outside can be a great way to boost endorphins and get nutrients your body needs.



Leverage the Power of Technology

When in quarantine or self-isolation, it can be easy to feel lonely. Fortunately, advancements in technology have made it easy to connect with others without having to physically be in contact with them. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recommends reaching out to loved ones with technology to reduce feelings of loneliness and anxiety, and to supplement your social life while you're quarantining or social distancing. If you're feeling down, use video calling technology or social media to get in touch with friends and family.

Don't Obsess Over the News

It can be easy to become overwhelmed by watching the news and reviewing the updates of the COVID-19 situation. While it's important to be informed of the situation, you should not obsess over the news. For example, instead of monitoring the news all day from home, consider checking for updates once in the morning and once at night.

Practice Positivity and Gratitude

Taking five minutes a day to write down the things that you are grateful for has been proven to lower stress levels and can help you change your mindset from negative to positive. While you're quarantining or social distancing, it's important to build time into your routine to practice positivity or express gratitude to change your mindset on your situation and boost your mood.

Give yourself Grace

We are all in uncharted territory. Have reasonable expectations of yourself and others. All of these changes have occurred quite suddenly. Do your best to adapt, but also allow yourself some time to figure out what works best for you and your family.

While keeping a positive attitude overall is important, it's also ok to give yourself permission to "feel all of the feels." It's natural to feel sad, overwhelmed, disappointed, fear, and anxiety over the unknown. Honor these feelings, but don't let them consume you.

Summary

Your mental wellbeing plays a huge role in your overall health and wellbeing. In the midst of taking care of your work and your family, take some time to take care of yourself. If you have concerns about your mental wellbeing while you're in quarantine, contact your EAP if available, a mental health professional or use SAMHSA's National Helpline by calling 800-662-HELP (4357).

For more information on how to navigate essential workforce wellbeing concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic, visit our OneDigital Coronavirus Advisory Hub, or reach out to your local OneDigital advisory team.

