



# MENTAL SELF-CARE DURING SELF-ISOLATION



*Remember those days not so long ago when you wished for more time? We're only a few weeks into the pandemic and many people are finding time now weighs heavily. There's no doubt the days and hours can seem interminable and it's easy to let it overwhelm you. We get it. However, once you start hanging around all day in your pyjamas or hoovering up everything on Netflix it's not good for your mental or physical health. What you do for your body has a major effect on your mental wellbeing. It's not just about exercise and eating properly. A key factor is your acceptance of the situation. Life is much easier if instead of pushing against things, we acknowledge them and make them work for us.*

## PLAN YOUR DAY, DON'T FOLLOW IT AROUND

Even the most free-spirited of us benefit from some sort of routine. We're not just talking about work, sleep, eat, exercise and repeat. Go to sleep and wake up at a reasonable time every day, shower and get dressed. This is about building a routine that includes things that bring you joy or satisfaction. As well as being kind to those around you, this is your chance to be nice to yourself and do things you normally wouldn't have time for. Create a space for something that adds value to your life and reminds you to live, not just exist. Whether it's playing music, trying that recipe you've had for ages or learning a new skill (there are hundreds of free courses on the internet and they increase daily) make it a must-do.

## STAY SOCIALLY CONNECTED

Despite wanting and needing social contact, it can be very easy during self-isolation to fall into a pattern of letting it slide.

When we're out, we receive and give each other little lifts each time we interact. Whether it's the person who makes your coffee, or the banter in the office, these seemingly small things are actually very important. Connect with someone outside the house once or twice a day. Set up virtual morning coffee and cake, Friday night drinks or a dance party. We're fortunate to live in an era where we have FaceTime, Skype, Facebook, Zoom and Whats App amongst others. Instead of thinking how restricted you are, reframe the situation: now you can socialise with a friend every night of the week because everyone's at home! Make an effort to dress up. A freshly pressed shirt, washed hair or some lipstick can be a great boost to your mental health.



**MORE INFORMATION**

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## GIVE EVERYONE IN THE FAMILY THEIR SPACE

You, your partner and your children will all struggle at some time. This is not life as usual so don't beat yourself up. Your sanity will benefit greatly if you accept that you are now living in different times and old rules are suspended. There is simply no way you can keep the house pristine when you're all home all the time. Lower your expectations of yourself and your family. Create a time-out room you can go to when you feel you're about to erupt. Do the same for each member of the family. For younger children it might be a cubby house outside or a fort made of blankets where they can retreat with a favourite toy. It's helpful to have a family discussion each morning and make an overall plan for the day so you're all on the same page and have things to look forward to.

## TUNE OUT TO FEAR, TUNE IN TO KINDNESS

Gratitude is one of the best things you can do for your mental health. Each day tell one other what you're grateful for. Instead of letting the sensationalism and repetition of news programs invade yours and your children's lives, look at the many acts of kindness, selflessness and support in the world and acknowledge them. Share them with your children. Keeping a gratitude journal each day has been shown to boost mental fitness in both adults and children, something we at Converge are passionate about.

## DON'T WAIT TO ASK FOR HELP

There is absolutely nothing to be gained by keeping your anxiety to yourself. If you start to feel negative or hopeless, reach out for help. Let your children know that they are able to do so as well. And remember we're always here for you at Converge EAP. **Call us on 1300 687 327.**

### *Other resources:*

#### **Kids Helpline:**

- For ages 5-25. Call 1800551800

#### **Lifeline:**

- General support for everyone. Call 131114



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