

Strategies for Managing Emotions During this Period of Isolation and Stress

Remember to breathe.

The Coronavirus has respiratory symptoms. As a result, it's natural that you may pay more attention to your breathing. Remember to exhale or you may start to convince yourself you're getting sick. No need to panic!

During Periods of Lower Emotions

Activities – Puzzles, board games, coloring, play an instrument, watch a favorite movie or television show, play video games, draw, cook, bake, write in a journal, read, listen to music, watch funny YouTube videos, play cards, look at pictures, put on makeup, do yard work, garden, go outside and listen (the wind, the birds, rustling of leaves, traffic, chatter, rain), play with your pet, knit/crochet, take pictures, work on the car, fly a kite, go for a drive, write a blog, ...

https://www.morningbrew.com/daily/stories/2020/03/16/morning-brewns-guide-living-best-quarantined-life?utm_source=morning_brew

Contribute – help out a neighbor, call/text a friend and see how they are doing, reach out to someone you haven't spoken to in a while, help around the house, clean up, fix something, create a bag of donations of items you don't need anymore, make a card for someone, help someone with homework or schoolwork, walk or feed the dog, order takeout from your local restaurants that are struggling.

Support entrepreneurial immigrant women who are delivering a weeks' worth of homecooked meals:
[EAT OFFBEAT](#)

During Periods of Higher Emotions

Intense Exercise – Run sprints up and down the block, run up and down the stairs, do pushups or jumping jacks, hold a plank for 60 secs, wall sits, lift weights. Set up a family competition or joint goal.

Change your Body Temperature – Dip your whole face in COLD water for 10 secs, take a breath and dip for another 10 secs, breathe and repeat (for a minute). Really, it works.

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During Periods of Higher Emotions

<p>Create a Different Emotion – Watch a funny show/video/movie; Listen to a comedian, Ask Alexa to tell you a joke; Listen to soothing music (if you’re feeling anxious) or upbeat music (if you’re feeling sad or down); Do something silly; Remember a funny thing that happened in the past in great detail; LAUGH OUT LOUD!</p>	<p>Paced Breathing – Inhale for a count of 5, Exhale for a count of 7 (hold your breath for the remainder of the count if you can’t inhale or exhale for the full count). Do this for 5-10 minutes! It will be uncomfortable at first since your body isn’t used to breathing so slowly. Keep going through the discomfort until your body regulates and you feel calmer.</p>
<p>Create an imaginary family member that you can blame things on. “Siri, I can’t believe you left the dishes in the sink.”</p>	
<p>Push Away the stress or an urge to react in a way that could make things worse – Walk away from the stressful situation if possible, Go for a hike, Put the stress in an imaginary box and put it on an imaginary shelf (you have control over your mind. You don’t actually have to act on emotions or urges). Make a choice to delay acting on impulses for an hour and do something else to pass the time. Hopefully in that hour, the urge will subside.</p>	<p>Progressive Muscle Relaxation – Tense and release your muscles one at a time starting from your toes and working up to your face. Hold the tension for 5 seconds, squeezing tightly, then release slowly and fully. Exhale and move to next muscle group. There are lots of YouTube videos to guide you in this as well.</p>
<p>Think of something else – Read something interesting or a thriller that you can’t put down; Do crossword puzzles, Sudoku, or Challenging Riddles; Count backwards from 100 by 3s, Do the alphabet backwards (then try to do it faster and faster without messing up); Name all 50 States; Name all (pick any category: for example, NFL Teams, Songs by a particular artist, colors, countries in Europe, words that start with the letter “G”, etc.); work on something you want to accomplish.</p>	<p>Create a different intense sensation – Hold ice cubes in your hands until they melt, chew ice cubes, listen to loud music, take a cold shower, squeeze a stress ball, pet your dog or cat.</p>
<p>Movement – Do yoga, stretch, dance, go for a walk/hike/run/bike ride, do jumping jacks or sit ups, practice karate or tai chi.</p>	<p>Make time for something meaningful to you – Pray, meditate, do something kind for yourself or others.</p>

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<p>Soothe your senses – Take a warm shower/bath, listen to soothing music, light a candle or spray some essential oils, stargaze, put on your favorite lotion/cologne/perfume, bake and enjoy the smells (and tastes), make tea or coffee and enjoy it fully through your senses, smell flowers, eat your favorite food (in moderation of course) and enjoy each bite mindfully, put on your most comfortable clothes and enjoy how they feel; give yourself a manicure or pedicure.</p>	<p>Clean vigorously – scrub the tub or sink, vacuum the house, organize mail/papers/clothes.</p>
<p>Imagine being someplace else – where is your favorite place? A beach? A ski slope? Someone else’s house? A park? Go there in your mind. Imagine every detail – what sounds do you hear? What do you smell? What do you see around you?</p>	<p>Plan something awesome for when this stress is all over: a trip you will take, a party you will throw, people you will see, someplace you will go, etc. This will help you stay in the mindset that THIS WILL PASS and WILL NOT LAST FOREVER.</p>
<p>Give yourself a brief vacation – turn off phones or other devices, unplug and relax momentarily to recharge yourself – emotionally and physically; take a nap, stretch, go outside and breathe some fresh air.</p> <p>Take a break from well-meaning check-ins Sometimes all those text chains and What’s App messages are actually stimulating anxiety. Model self-care, tell your pals you will be back on line in a few hours.</p>	<p>Do Not Stay in Bed – Get up and shower, get dressed, go outside, eat something, etc. While you can’t do everything, you can do something...</p> <p>Read up on the WHO strategies for anxiety:</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html</p>
<p>Buy something (online) mindfully and within your limits so you don’t create an additional stressor.</p>	<p>Call your therapist and schedule a teletherapy session. There are many of us willing to help!</p> <p>Join or start a virtual support group</p>
<p>Be Kind to yourself – validate yourself, “This is hard and I’m doing the best I can,” or “This won’t last forever. I will get through this.” It’s appropriate to be anxious during this period when we must be hyper-vigilant. You also need to function.</p>	<p>Join a dance party</p> <p>https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/pop/9335531/coronavirus-quarantine-music-events-online-streams</p>

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Set a long-term goal and determine the steps toward it and then take the first step. So, if you've been meaning to write a blog, determine what the steps are (for example, create a list of ideas, write an article/post, decide on which forum to post it, etc.) and begin to make progress.

Get healthy

Set up a regular exercise routine and learn the pleasure of home cooked meals. Try an app like [Noom](#) to track your progress and get healthy eating tips.

Get Smarter

Check out this source of documentaries:

<https://curiositystream.com/>

Take a free class. There are hundreds of no-cost Ivy League classes from Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Penn, Princeton and Yale, and I'm sure many other schools are doing the same:

<https://www.classcentral.com/collection/ivy-league-moocs>

Add some ideas of your own

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Helpful Websites for Distraction:	
Virtual Tours of Museums around the World	https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours
Virtual Tour of Zoos.	https://triblive.com/lifestyles/more-lifestyles/bored-kids-can-take-a-virtual-field-trip-via-zoo-websites/
Take a break from Earthly goings-on and visit Mars for a little while!	https://www.diyphotography.net/nasa-makes-entire-media-library-publicly-accessible-copyright-free/?fbclid=IwAR1ExjqMZoPRo0yo8dSk1T681dY13LeIe208vQ5Kh3fzsda9BC1VoWXvLdA
The Metropolitan Opera Streamed Online.	https://www.vulture.com/2020/03/coronavirus-the-metropolitan-opera-to-stream-free-operas.html?utm_source=fb&utm_medium=s1&utm_campaign=vulture&fbclid=IwAR0WYtQ4UTpprp3dm3TB-bnli8zikmpX4pNL4OzpdS9loxckZcJKJr8JlzM
SING! Join “friends you haven’t met yet” around the piano and belt out a few show tunes.	https://www.timeout.com/newyork/news/maries-crisis-is-staying-open-as-a-virtual-piano-bar-every-night-031920
Boredom Busters – Ideas for Families.	https://familyguide.com/boredom-busters-110-fun-at-home-activities-for-families-kids-2/
Educational/Fun Ideas for Kids & Families.	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EpUcd8JO3e9gTobQcqjP_bwnWWaEu_eVuGSJHsToYA/mobilebasic https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html

Compiled by Joanna Fava, MA, PhD, from various sources including [DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets](#), Second Edition, by Marsha Linehan 2015; and further enhanced with resources from Melanie A. Katzman, PhD.

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Indoor Activities for Kids.	https://www.mother.ly/child/montessori-inspired-indoor-activities?rebelltitem=4#rebelltitem4 https://www.wsj.com/articles/family-going-stir-crazy-these-apps-websites-and-games-could-help-11584702001?emailToken=d0d846bfb35f2ee71fe8c5145641f15f8bQ2gpH9velk4KJ4WQNDclcz7Wj90ANmxnczG2FT1klbSNpwo5w7SSLTgdBxaHcd1Ob1y3xbYmmbM51QJL2Q1+0AgSt7XrUjCo9Ogzia589VYLXU9PbSbxWvQeiPXyLe&reflink=article_copyURL_share https://twitter.com/shaneaparrish/status/1238839520478605318?s=12&utm_source=morning_brew
Read a poem, here's why it helps:	https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/05/reader-center/poetry-national-news.html?referringSource=articleShare
Practice a Foreign Language.	Duolingo app or https://www.duolingo.com/
Be creative!	Pinterest, Instagram... there are ideas everywhere
Free Yoga, Online exercise routines & exercise apps.	Exercise studios and centers are offering free classes this month! http://www.freeyogaproject.com https://classpass.com/try/live-workouts
Educational Resources for everyone trying to suddenly figure out homeschooling!	www.amazingeducationalresources.com
Local Libraries are offering online resources, books, games, movies, etc.	Check your local library website

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Stay connected with resources that keep you healthy and safe. AA is one form of support that has online meetings. There are many others. Search for what you need.	http://aa-intergroup.org/directory.php
Read up on potential positive outcomes from the pandemic.	https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-coronavirus-pandemic-is-not-good-but-the-news-is-not-all-bad-2020031919247 https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-nine-good-things-to-come-out-of-covid-19-pandemic-11959667

Additional tips to keep in mind

Practice effective vs. empty reassurance

- Open your ears. In an effort to help, don't silence your friends and colleagues. Don't rush to reassure someone until you have listened to what their true concern is.
- Open your heart. Let others express their fears— without judgment.
- Engage your analytical skills. Once you have confronted the emotional as well as practical realities, you can shift to exploring solutions, appreciating that sometimes there are no easy or obvious answers. At times, the best you can do is listen.

Have a morning huddle/scrum

Act like an agile tech startup—have a quick, standing morning meeting with your family/roommates to answer these questions:

- How did yesterday go?
- What do we need to do to refine our social distancing/WFH arrangements?
- What do you need to succeed today? This may include a request for greater quiet, access to the landline for better reception during an important call, or a chance to have a few hours at home with no one around.

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Additional tips to keep in mind

Noise levels

Inescapable noise stresses our system. Blood pressures rise, problem-solving diminishes. Use headsets to listen to music. Don't pace around the house on your conference call and ask your family members and roommates to do the same. Turn off electronic notifications.

Give yourselves downtime if your home office gets “crowded”

If you live in a small place, try having one of you go into a separate room and shut the door to relax. Your home has become a satellite office, but it's not a prison. Take turns going out and leaving your partner alone. Discuss times that might work for both of you to coordinate “away time.” Honor the [introvert](#). Historically, your beloved may have revealed their sparkling [personality](#) after work, but during the day, they prefer not to engage. Take the hint.

Agree to a goofy code word

Let's be honest— WFH, you and your family or BFF are going get on each other's nerves at some point. Find a code word to let the other person know you're reaching your limit. Make up a word or phrase that makes you both giggle. Break the tension.