

Keeping Your Distance To Stay Safe

In order to slow the spread of an illness, public officials may ask you to practice social distancing, quarantine, or isolation. Social distancing means keeping a safe distance away from others and avoiding large public gatherings. If you are asked to quarantine, this means you must avoid all contact with others completely because you may have been exposed. Isolation involves separating an individual from everyone else because they have contracted the illness.

Spending long amounts of time at home and away from others can take a toll on you mentally. You may begin to experience the following emotions: fear, anxiety, depression, boredom, anger, frustration, or irritability. It is important that you find ways to cope with these feelings so that you can continue to keep yourself and others safe during this time. Below are some helpful coping methods you can use to get you through this trying time.

Limit news consumption to reliable sources

Be sure that you are obtaining accurate information regarding the outbreak. Balance the time you spend on social media and watching the news with other activities. Too much exposure to media coverage can increase your fear and anxiety.

Create and follow a daily routine

This will help you maintain a sense of order, purpose, and normalcy in your life. Try to include regular daily activities like exercise and learning.

Stay virtually connected with others

You may not be able to speak to others face-to-face during this time but phone calls, video chats, and online social support networks can provide much needed socialization. If you are feeling sad, use these methods of communication to discuss your feelings with others who can help you feel better.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Be sure you are practicing good self-care during this time. Get enough sleep, exercise, and eat well. Avoid using alcohol and drugs to cope with the stress and if needed, consider virtual health care options to speak with a medical professional.

Stay positive

Examine your worries and try to be realistic in assessing the actual concern. Focus on the things you can do and accept the things that you cannot change. A great way to stay hopeful is to keep a gratitude journal and write everything you are grateful for in it each day. Remember by taking measures to avoid contact with others, you are reducing the spread of the illness and protecting those who are vulnerable.

Source: [APA.org](https://www.apa.org)

