

SIX WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED AND INDULGE IN SELF-CARE WHILE WE STAY AT HOME

JUN 25TH, 2020 | MENTAL WELLBEING



It is business unusual, and even preparing a meal can be challenging right now. However, don't let this time at home have a prolonged impact on your mental wellbeing. Be mindful of how you are going to feel on the other side of this strange time. Vitality Wellness clinician, Dr Seranne Motilal suggests these measures to keep you connected.

1. **Manage your newsfeed**

“While it's important to stay up to date with COVID-19 developments in order to prepare and protect yourself and your family, constantly watching news reports can cause anyone to feel anxious. Limit news about the outbreak by choosing a specific time, once or twice a day, to get updates,” she says.

Dr Motilal adds that there is plenty of misinformation and rumors about COVID-19 doing the rounds on social media which can cause unnecessary panic. “Choose information from trusted sources such as health experts or government bodies.

“Think twice before sharing information without fact-checking it against credible sources first. Sharing false information can affect the wellbeing of others. And try to limit sharing news that may cause anxiety or panic. Positive comments go a long way in uplifting the general mood,” she says.

2. Take care of yourself

“Pay attention to your needs and feelings and ask for help when you need it. Try journaling or talking to someone you trust,” she says.

Dr Motilal adds that continuing with healthy habits is important for managing your mental health. “Make time for regular exercise, eat healthily and keep a regular sleep routine. Spend some time outside each day in your garden or on your balcony. If you have neither, sit by an open window to get some fresh air and sunlight,” she adds.

“An important message is to avoid using harmful coping mechanisms, such as smoking or drinking too much alcohol. These will worsen both your mental and physical health long term,” says Dr Motilal.

She suggests using enjoyable and relaxing activities to do at home. “This can be anything from reading for leisure to a home pedicure, as long as they are calming for you. If you live with others, choose activities you can do together like, playing board games, sport or cards – again if they bring calm and not too much competition!” says Dr Motilal.

“Be kind to yourself and others. Remember that this is a difficult time for everyone, and we may not behave as we normally do – act with compassion if you find yourself losing patience,” she says.

3. Keep your mind engaged

“Try to keep a daily routine at home. Write a plan for your day or your week to help you stay productive and feel more in control. Set goals that you can achieve at home to help give you a sense of purpose and something else to focus on. Take advantage of the many free tutorials and courses online,” says Dr Motilal.

4. Stay connected

“Keep in touch with family and friends. Staying connected to those close to you is important for your mental wellbeing. Although meeting family and friends in person is not possible at the moment, there are plenty of other ways to stay connected via email, social media or video conference. And, take time out for those around you – kids and spouses, parents – this is a great opportunity to deepen relationships with those you are staying at home with,” she adds.

5. Focus on what you can control

“You might be feeling a sense of grief or mourning at this time. Acknowledge that some things are outside of your control right now but remind yourself that constantly thinking about the situation is not helpful and will only make you feel overwhelmed. Focus instead on the things that you can control, such as getting reliable information and taking the recommended steps to help flatten the curve,” Dr Motilal says.

6. Finally, keep things in perspective

“There is a difference between denial and choosing to focus on the positives. It is easy to overlook the positive aspects in our lives when we are faced with so many news stories about the outbreak. Regularly writing down the things that you are grateful for can help balance your perspective,” says Dr Motilal.

She suggests that actively seeking out stories of joy and happiness are valuable. “And don’t underestimate the impact keeping a sense of humor can have on your ability to cope during uncertain times. Watch comedy shows, listen to funny stories... tell jokes! When was the last time you had the time to do this?” Dr Motilal adds.



Visit the Vitality at Home page

(<https://www.discovery.co.za/vitality/vitality-at-home-exercise-nutrition-health>) for more ideas on how to stay healthy and rewarded at home.

Keep up to date with the latest Vitality news on Facebook ([Discovery Vitality](#)) and Twitter ([@Vitality SA](#)).

Stay home. Stay healthy. Stay rewarded.