

Managing isolation and anxiety.

Feelings of loneliness, isolation, stress and anxiety can be perfectly normal. At times like these it helps to reach out to someone you know and trust to share, and some of these tips may also help you feel better.

Be social. Socialization is key, especially if you feel isolated. Feeling connected to others wards off loneliness and stress. If you are unable to leave your house, you can get together with friends and family online or on your phone. There are apps that make face-to-face conversations easy. Send emails and texts. Get in touch on social media. Pick up the phone and say hi. Look online for religious services and cultural events. Many organizations are offering digital gatherings. Share your feelings with others. Conversation helps you feel less alone and more supported.

Spend quality time with partners. With a lot of partners still working from home, it's a unique chance for quality time. Do those activities you don't always have time for. Play board games. Do puzzles. Bake together. Have deep, relaxed conversations while you have the opportunity.

Take a break from news. The 24-hour news cycle can make anxiety spike. Give yourself a limit. Stick with what you need to know and what's happening in your community. Try limiting your news intake to 30-60 minutes or 1-2 updates a day. That should be enough to be informed. Stick with 1-2 reliable news sources. Quickly scroll past triggering headlines and photos. Read only what's relevant to you. If you have trouble detaching, ask a friend to filter what's out there and give you only the updates you need.





Change your mindset. Avoid thinking too much about the future or worst-case scenarios. Forecasting can trigger anxiety. Instead of saying, “I’ll never recover,” tell yourself, “I’ll make it through this.” Try mindfulness, guided meditation and yoga. Spectrum.Life provide digital yoga classes and a guided meditation ‘Be Calm’.

Practice gratitude. Studies suggest finding something to be grateful for every day improves mood. So jot something down. Maybe it’s first responders and service workers who keep us safe. Maybe it’s family, friends, and the roof over your head.

Get busy. Take advantage of the slower pace and free time. Try a new hobby. Learn a new language. Do something that gives you a sense of purpose or accomplishment. Take on what you’ve been putting off, like spring cleaning, finances, or paperwork. Play uplifting music. Tune into TV shows and movies that distract you from current events. Do things that make you feel good.

Go outdoors. Fresh air and exercise help with loneliness and stress. Spending time in nature and exercising releases feel-good chemicals in your brain to boost your mood. Take a walk if you can. Even if your state mandates you to stay home, you can go outside. Just keep a healthy distance from others. Wear a face mask when you’re in places where you can’t stay at least 6 feet apart.

Help others. Helping others benefits everyone. By giving support, you get a sense of control and purpose. It can be as simple as a phone call or text saying, “How are you doing? Thinking of you. We’ll get through this.” Knowing someone’s thinking of you does wonders. If you’re not sheltered in place or quarantined, offer to deliver food to others who can’t leave home. Find a local organization that’s taking donations.

Take action. Do something about the things you have control over. Do what you can to stay safe and healthy. If you’re worried about bills, be proactive. Call your credit card companies or bank. Many businesses are offering flexible schedules or lower payments.

Take care of yourself. Now’s not the time to slack off on sleep, exercise, or diet. Good self-care offsets anxiety and stress. Eat well. Go for walks if you can. Get 6-8 hours of sleep a night. Try deep breathing, stretching, meditation, and yoga. Have a daily routine. Have a regular wake-up and bedtime. Make time for exercise and relaxation.

Get help. If you’re having anxiety, contact your EAP who offer in-the-moment support from an experienced counsellor. If you had anxiety before the coronavirus outbreak and your feelings of fear and panic are getting worse, it’s important that you reach out to your doctor or therapist.

Try a new perspective. This is a unique situation, but it’s temporary. Many people are on a slower timetable right now. It’s OK to slow your pace.

