

WELLNESS TIPS

LONELINESS

Whether you value your time alone or enjoy frequent social activities, restrictions of social distancing in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have probably altered your social contacts and ways of connecting with others.

These changes may have resulted in feelings of loneliness. Loneliness is a subjective experience that anyone can experience. Living alone does not equate with loneliness and living with others doesn't necessarily prevent it. And it is not a personal failing if it occurs.

There are steps that can be taken to decrease a sense of loneliness.

- Video-chat platforms such as Zoom have become a popular way to help maintain connections. There are drawbacks, such as lack of translation with ebb and flow of conversation, freezing, etc. But you can meet up with several people at once. If you video-chat, avoid scrolling and texting so that you can provide your undivided attention to the other participants.
- If you are "Zoomed out" from your classes and meetings, perhaps talking on the phone would be more satisfying and there isn't the delay encountered with Zoom.
- Arrange to meet in a backyard or a park to visit in person while maintaining social distancing.
- Try to set a schedule for connecting with others so that something is in place to look forward to and you don't have to make a daily decision about contacting someone.
- Consider participating in a virtual class such as exercise or yoga. Join the classes being taught by CCOM med students. Or teach a class.
- Write regular notes, letters, or cards to someone to help you feel connected.
- Do something for someone else. Take them something you have cooked, baked or made. Mow a neighbor's lawn or do an errand, while maintaining social distancing. Or just let them know you are thinking of them.
- Try to connect with the people with whom you live. Engage in activities you enjoy or try a new activity or project together.
- Do you have nieces or nephews? Friends with children? Read to them over video-chat. Meet them on HouseParty and play a game. Play ChessKid.

It's a balancing act. Remember the reasons for social distancing, but also that staying connected with others is essential for our well-being.

John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health “How to Prevent Social Isolation from Making Loneliness Worse”. Brian Simpson. April 3, 2020.

<https://www.jhsph.edu/covid-19/articles/how-to-prevent-social-isolation-from-making-loneliness-worse.html>

Time “Covid-19 is Making America’s Loneliness Epidemic Even Worse”. Jamie Ducharme. May 8, 2020.

<https://time.com/5833681/loneliness-covid-19/>

National Council on Aging “Staying Connected While Staying Home”. Susan Stiles. March 18, 2020.

<https://www.ncoa.org/blog/staying-connected-while-staying-home/>

If you would like assistance in coping with loneliness or other concerns, contact the MSCC.

Stay healthy!

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