

## Ways to deal with the current situation, social distancing, isolation, uncertainty and anxiety



### Seniors and People Living Alone

- Establish a new routine and stick with it in regards to keeping hygiene, dressing, and meal times
- Make time to exercise at home if your outdoor activities have been limited, and open windows to let in the fresh air. If you have a stationary bike that's a good option, but you may not have the right seat for your bike. Instead of buying some expensive bike, how about lifting a water bottle up from a table and putting it back for 50 repetitions? Think easy, but movement.
- Call your friends and set a time for dinner with them so you both can eat and talk while eating.
- Do not hesitate to call your friends and family to help you with groceries.
- It is not a time to be heroic, your family needs you—so make sure you have three meals per day and two small snacks.
- Make a calendar or use a notebook that you can mark the date on top and make daily notes of what you did, as it is so easy to not remember what you did day-to-day. Make notes daily.
- In the notebook mentioned above, make sure you write what you need to buy.
- Schedule time to do chores.

- Schedule time to relax with a book or a good movie.
- Keep in touch with relatives, friends, and neighbors—use technology such as video chats to keep visual contact with others.
- Limit your access to social media and seek information from reliable sources only.
- If you are overwhelmed and anxious, don't wait to seek help. There are various ways to help you cope. Remember at this time we can talk to you via the internet.

### **Parents with Small Kids**

- Establish a new routine and stick with it in regards to keeping hygiene, dressing, meal times, and bedtimes.
- Involve children in running the household.
- Divide childcare whenever possible between all caregivers that are home.
- Whenever it's your turn to take a break, use it to decompress: take a shower/bath, read a book, take a nap, exercise, go for a quick walk alone.
- Depending on children's ages, allow for some unstructured play time and let them play as they want/need/should be alone.
- Try to schedule some time alone with your children, whether it's to talk, play, read a book, or just cuddle and watch cartoons.
- Organize some family playtime with board games, pillow forts, arts and crafts, or dancing and exercising.
- Stick to regular bedtimes so you can have the evening to yourself and your spouse.
- Model your behavior. Children are watching you and will follow your lead. If your lead is poor, you will see poor behavior from your children, but if you model calmness, flexibility, and smile you will most likely get this back.

### **Parents with School-Age Kids**

- Establish a new routine and stick with it in regards to keeping hygiene, dressing, school work, exercising, meals, and bedtime. You and your child should sit down and write out a routine; be sure to allow for their input! In other words, if you exercise in the morning your child can do so at 3pm. It doesn't matter when, it matters that they were allowed to make the decision which will more likely help them stick to the plan.
- Assign tasks to your kids to involve them in running the household.
- Try to divide childcare between caregivers to give everyone time to do what they need to do (work, errands, chores). So maybe you share a dining table with your son when you work, read,

etc., but your husband will play ping pong in the garage, walk with your daughter, and/or play basketball outside for a few minutes. It all counts and the responsibility is divided.

-Establish particular hours for school work and, if you work from home, establish work hours, too. Schedule time for work and for breaks. Stick with it.

-Involve kids, especially older ones, to help out with cooking meals. They will learn skills and you'll have an easier job prepping meals. It is a great time to teach our children how to clean and cook; in other words, they are in school even while helping in the kitchen. Life skills can be so hard to teach them when they are in school and involved in after school activities.

-Whenever it's your turn to take a break, use it to decompress: take a shower/bath, read a book, take a nap, exercise, or go for a quick walk alone. Let your spouse take a break as well.

-Give kids time to play, read, watch some TV, or play games. Observe their activity on social media, what games they play online, and whom they talk to. Make sure you notice if your child withdraws, prefers loneliness, or stays in their room all the time. This is not good all the time. Let them talk to you, to make sure your child is not depressed. Do not ignore loneliness, withdrawals, lack of exercise activity, and poor diet! Those can be symptoms of depression.

-Give them some space but make sure they spend time with family.

-Organize family playtime with board games, arts and crafts, or dancing and exercise. When you do get them involved: stop controlling, stop telling them what they do wrong and should do better. Let them watch you and learn from you what you do. This will help with avoiding arguments and future withdrawal from this activity. In other words, if your teenager decides to be involved and you criticize them, they will not return. I would not!

-Help your teenagers connect with their friends. But, first talk to them about who they should and would like to invite to facetime, etc. This is time for reflection about their friends and which ones are friends and which are just acquaintances.

-Talk to your teenagers about responding to 250 texts within a few minutes when they were supposed to be doing something else. Teach them that muting their phone is an option. Teach them that they have choices.

-If you wanted to run a mile a day, start now! If you wanted to do yoga and never had time to do so, start now!

-Meditation is great, as it takes a few minutes but the benefits of it stay for much longer!

-Limit your texting to a certain amount of time.

-Limit your Facebook time to a certain amount of time. Stick to your plans, as reading your news feed may take up more time that you can afford.

-Be a good role model: your teenager watches you and will behave as you do. So, if you have a friend coming over, they would like to have one, too. This is not a good resolution at this time. If you go to the store, either engage your teenager with it or stay home, as they think whatever you do they can do, too.

-If you yell, your kids will yell, and the house will be a horrible place to be for everyone; so, do not yell under any circumstances! Watch your reactions and watch how you communicate as your kids will do exactly the same. They are your mirror—so if you show poor manners/behaviors they will copy you more than they already do in such confined spaces.

### **For Everyone**

-Establish a new routine, as everything is new.

-Stick with the schedule. Make time for: everyday hygiene, dressing, eating regularly, household chores, exercise, and relaxation.

-If you work from home, schedule time for work, like you would if you left the house, but make sure to leave time for breaks, and put it down at the end of the day. You should not work all day long!

-Make time for things you always wanted to do: read all the books you planned to read, watch movies, start an art project, clean closets/garage, etc.

-Keep in touch with selected friends. Remember: one friend is good, you do not have to have a million friends.

-Use technology wisely to remotely connect with people whom you are not able to visit.

-Limit your social media exposure. Being on Facebook can take up your time on reading unreliable information, not quality proven articles and/or books.

-Watch the news, but limit this time. Turn off the TV when you are doing something else; in this way you will avoid vicarious emotional stress/trauma and/or injuries.

-If you are feeling overwhelmed or anxious, do not wait and reach out for help. We are here for you at [contact@wegierekpsychology.com](mailto:contact@wegierekpsychology.com)" [contact@wegierekpsychology.com](mailto:contact@wegierekpsychology.com)