

Mental Health & Isolation

Overcoming Feelings of Claustrophobia

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic. This resulted in many of us, even if not infected by the virus, self-isolating at home in order to stay safe. Cancelled travel plans, panic over re-sources & information overload could be a recipe for increased levels of anxiety.

Here are a few pointers that could help you survive spiraling negative thoughts about this uncertain time.

Mind Over Matter

Reframing "I'm trapped inside" to "I am able to focus on my home & myself"

- As bad as the present circumstances may seem, look at the ability to work from home as an opportunity to refocus your attention from the external to the internal.
- Do at least one productive thing a day, this can lead to a more positive attitude.
- Set your sights on long-avoided tasks e.g. redecorating, home gardening etc.
- Reorganise, or create something you've always wanted to.
- Approaching this time with a mindset of feeling trapped or stuck will only stress you out more. This is your chance to slow down & focus on yourself.

A Chaotic Home = A Chaotic Mind

Don't Let the Uncertainty on the Outside Get Inside

- Given the uncertainty happening outside the home, keep the inside organized, predictable & clean.
- Setting up mental zones for daily activities can be helpful to organise your day, e.g. try not to eat in bed, or work on the couch.
- Loosening those boundaries can confuse your routine & make the day feel very long.
- A cluttered home can cause you to become uneasy & claustrophobic of your environment. Keeping it tidy & clean also decreases anxieties of "letting the virus in".

Create a New "Quarantine Ritual"

Making the Best Use of the Time On Your Hands

- With your newfound time, do something special during these quarantined days e.g. have a daily journal to jot down thoughts & feelings to reflect on later.
- Having something special to do during this time will help you look forward to each new day.

Overcoming Feelings of Loneliness

Staying Connected at This Time is Vital to Your Mental Health

- Think about what you can do to connect or stay connected with people e.g. using technological devices to stay updated & close to loved ones globally.
- If persons in your household do not have opportunity to work from home & there are times when you have the house to yourself, it can promote feelings of loneliness. To combat this listen to a chatty radio station or podcast when your home feels too quiet.

The Future of Mental Health

Telehealth: An Option to Talk to a Professional If Your Anxiety Becomes Unmanageable

- Families in Action is one of many mental health organizations at this time that are offering telehealth options such as video-counselling services.
- Remember to seek help if your anxiety is reaching proportions that is unmanageable without professional help.
- Letting go of illusions of control & finding peace in the fact that you are doing your part to "flatten the curve" can build mental strength to combat the stressful situation the whole globe is experiencing.