

Combating Feelings of Loneliness *during* COVID-19

We're all experiencing loneliness right now. When living apart from friends or loved ones, our typical social interactions are altered by the need to practice social distancing—or physical distancing—in the wake of the COVID-19 guidelines. Despite current circumstances, we can stay connected to one another and demonstrate care and compassion in new and creative ways! Here are a number of strategies to help inhibit feelings of loneliness while practicing physical distancing in the wake of COVID-19.

- Call or video chat with friends and family members. Reconnect with friends or classmates you haven't seen in several weeks, months, or years.
 - Create and follow a daily routine which includes regular exercise, meals, and social interaction. Also ensure that your evenings are structured differently than your days, and your weekends look different than your weekdays.
 - Spend time with others within your household. Talk to the people you live with. Good, old-fashioned board games or puzzles can bring connection.
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- Get outside. Go for walks every day. Exercise outside with workout buddies—maintain an appropriate distance (~6ft) and ensure <10 people are gathered. Consider singing together with your neighbors like in Italy, Spain, Miami, or New York City!
 - Join the “party.” Virtual dance parties, hosted by celebrity DJs and music artists, are popping up online every day. Spotify also has pre-recorded parties available to download and listen to with friends.
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- Join a virtual group exercise class. Many gyms and equipment companies are offering FREE access to online classes—live or pre-recorded.
 - Consider the altruistic reasons for social distancing—helping others feels good. Write a letter or create an original art piece to share with older neighbors, or nearby nursing homes/hospitals/inpatient facilities/first responder units. Research how to virtually tutor a younger child in your community.
 - While social media or video games can provide social interaction, use them sparingly, as they can easily become habit-forming and preoccupy too much of your time.

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