



Top 10 Tips for Staying Mentally Healthy in Uncertain Times

By Tess Howells

① “This too shall pass”

Although times may be challenging at the moment, it won’t be this way forever and we will get through this. Accepting what is rather than resisting it, is the first step – then you can focus your energy on what you can do.

② Stay informed

Keep up to date with reliable information from reputable sources, e.g. ABC and the Commonwealth or State Health Departments

- But don’t get news-saturated, take regular breaks from Covid-19
- Switch your attention to something more light-hearted at least once a day (before bed can be a good time)

③ Deliberately focus on what is good and right

Deliberately focus your attention on what is still good and right in your world.

- Complete a gratitude journal each day – write down three things that you are grateful for
- Keep “positive aspects” journals for each domain of your life, for example, work, relationships, health - and write something that is positive about each of these domains each day
- Start a “positive aspects” jar in your household and have each member write something that is positive about their lives and put it in the jar each day, then read them out at the end of the week and start again for the new week. This can be particularly helpful for children, assisting them to pay attention to what is still working well and reducing their anxiety.

④ It’s important to stay in touch

Social distancing is really physical distancing – it’s important to stay in touch

- Phones, emails, skype, snail mail (get creative)
- If you have relatives in aged care, see if it could be possible to visit an outside window of the aged care facility, or have a staff member facilitate a brief skype session (check with staff first)
- Drive-bys, especially for special occasions



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⑤ Stay physically active, even if quarantined

- Lift weights (you can use litre or two-litre bottles filled with water)
- Find a place that you could do laps of walking, e.g. around the clothes line outside, or up and down a long hallway
- Skip or run on the spot, do push ups, planks
- Check out online exercise classes, e.g. yoga, dance and have some fun

⑥ Eat healthy food

- Exchange recipes with others and try some new menus
- Check online for recipes that can stretch the budget and make good use of left-over food
- Investigate options for growing your own – it's amazing what can be grown in pots and it's great to involve children in food production and preparation

⑦ Get creative

Use your time in isolation to do things that you haven't normally had the time for, or rediscover past hobbies, e.g.

- Consider an online training course
- Clean out those cupboards and wardrobes
- Re-organise your filing system
- Write, draw, paint, collect things – get your children involved

⑧ Reach out to others

- Research shows that those who are involved in helping others have better mental health
- Is there a way that you could help local elderly or disabled citizens whilst still maintaining social distance? Can you safely check in on people who live alone? Collect their medicines or assist with groceries?

⑨ Stay close and connected to your pets

- Pets are great at reducing our anxiety and we can help them with theirs too



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⑩ Stay connected to your personal faith/spirituality and values

- Whilst places of worship may be closed, consider novel ways for staying connected to your faith groups – many churches are offering online opportunities
- For First-Nations people, consider opportunities for taking time on country in a safe way, share stories amongst those in your household
- Practice meditation to give your brain a rest and refresh