

Tips on dealing with self-isolation or quarantine

If there is a chance that you have been exposed or you are practicing social distancing, you are trying to avoid mixing with other people and chances are you are not even leaving your house. This may feel daunting as you may be watching carefully for possible symptoms, concerned about how you go about getting items you may run out of at home, and what to do within your four walls to keep busy.

Research by The Lancet suggests that quarantine has often been associated with negative mental health effects including post-traumatic stress symptoms, confusion, and anger. Stressors related to longer quarantine duration, infection fears, frustration, boredom, inadequate supplies, inadequate information, financial loss and stigma.

It is important to note that this is not a normal way of life and thus it may result in increased anxiety levels. In order to reduce the negative mental health effects and cope better during this time it may help to try and see this as a different period of time in your life, and not necessarily a bad one, even if you didn't choose it.

These tips may help you manage the stress and anxiety of self-isolation or quarantine:



Keep things in perspective. Try to not wait to feel symptoms that may or may not appear.



Try to keep your daily routine. Create a daily routine that prioritises looking after yourself. Try new skills, practice relaxation techniques, bedding down an exercise routine, experimenting in the kitchen or catching up on a series or reading a book. Be mindful that the way in which you get through your day may look very different.



Take care of your physical health. Ensure you are taking care of your wider health needs, such as general supplementation or access to prescription medication where needed. Stay hydrated and stay active. Keep focused on your personal health goals during this time. These are all linked to staying on track in looking after our mental health.



Stay connected to loved ones. Technology today allows us to stay in touch using digital platforms such as video calling, instant chat, emailing, etc. If the constant messaging is contributing to an increase in your anxiety levels, keep them on mute, and check in when you have the energy to sift through them as it is also important to stay updated during this time.



Rest and reflect. Build your personal stress management toolkit by taking the time to understand what your personal triggers are that elevates your stress levels.



Understand yourself better. There are a number of tools available online that can assist with an appropriate line of questioning. Journaling can also be a useful tool to reflect on and make visible our own patterns of behavior that we may want to address.