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MENTAL HEALTH

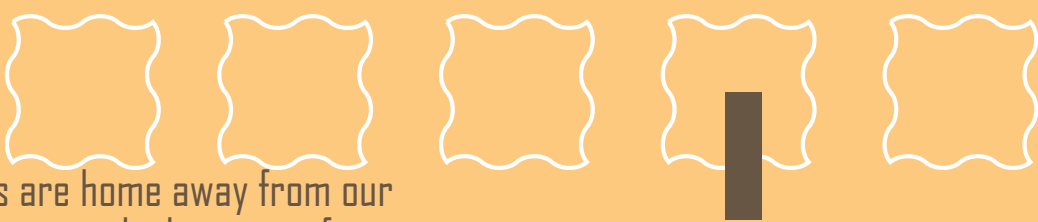
and

WELLNESS TIPS

for

SOCIAL ISOLATION

Anxiety, distress, loneliness, and other discomfort is normal during this time. You are not alone in feeling this and it's completely understandable. Allow yourself to not be ashamed of feeling this way and that things are going to be different than your normal routine for a while and that's okay. Here are some Mental Health and Wellness Tips to consider as you attend to your personal needs and self-care over the coming days.



Many of us are home away from our regular routine, which is great for a short time period, but can be problematic in some ways over a prolonged amount of time. Create a structure for yourself and your day or week – it doesn't have to be extensive or intense! But being intentional about the use of time can be key when having too much free time on our hands.

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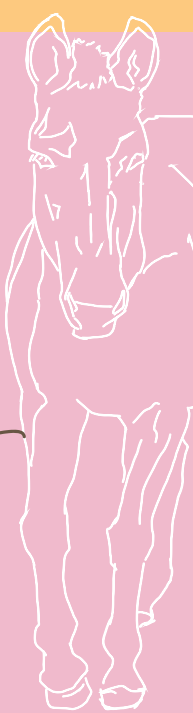
SOME STRUCTURE

Examples:
Shower and prepare for your morning routine as usual; consider scheduling time for class work and projects, even if there isn't a requirement to do so; try to keep bedtimes and wake times consistent; structure time for leisure and fun or creative projects; schedule specific nights of the week for specific activities; schedule distance connection with friends or family.

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CONNECT DISTANCE



So I feel lonely but am being told to stay away from others – What now? We are social distancing but that doesn't mean we have to remain isolated. While connecting over technology might feel less natural or more awkward, these methods could provide needed social interaction and support in weird and challenging times.



Examples:
Try videochat to connect with others you are used to interacting with; schedule a regular time to connect with friends or family; try a new game online with friends; reach out to a loved one you've been meaning to contact but haven't had the time.

You know that pastime or hobby you have always wanted to try? What a better time to build a new skill, practice art, or engage with activities you have left behind due to busy schedule! Just because we are distancing from others may not mean we have to be inside (depending on current mandates in your area) – take a walk, get into jogging, or spend some leisure time outside in the sun. There are plenty of things to learn or try, and why not now?

Examples:
Read a new book for fun; start learning a new language; walk your pet; start or finish a craft, puzzle, or project; build or create something; learn to code; do yardwork; start writing; practice an instrument; take a free course online; walk/run 5k.

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CREATIVE



It can be helpful to focus on the future through beginning a long task or project that might take several days or even weeks to complete, something that allows you to see progress over time towards completion. This can assist in having something to look forward to each day or week, can help with structuring your day, and can also provide a sense of accomplishment when completed. It may also be important to pace yourself on projects rather than completing them all in one sitting, or burning yourself out on a specific activity or pastime.

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FOCUS FUTURE

Examples:
Start a large or challenging skills-based project; complete a difficult puzzle with roommates or family; begin playing a story-based game; watch a couple of the top 100 best movies of all time each week; start a new book series; revisit a favorite long-standing show or series; find a new channel or podcast; try a "reading challenge" or join a book club online.

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TAKE MINUTE

Of course, it is important to stay informed. It is also important to give ourselves a break from the constant bombardment of information throughout the day and week. None of us need to be online or plugged from wake until sleep, so provide yourself with a time away from media and technology, just to see what it is like. While likely challenging, it might also be a breath of fresh air, especially if experiencing increased anxiety or stress.

Examples:
Leave mobile device in the other room for a defined amount of time; take a walk and notice the sky or engage in mindfulness in your room; challenge yourself to refrain from social and news media for a half or full day period; use activities that help us find balance amidst stress a chaos such as meditating, relaxation techniques, or grounding activities.
www.virusanxiety.com is a great resource.



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