



Protecting Your Mental Health

What can you do when working from home?

Many people are working from home during the current pandemic, some for the first time. This situation has required many people to adapt and adapt very quickly. Many people are trying to maintain a work routine as well as balancing other responsibilities. This can include new challenges with childcare or eldercare. This can also include finding a proper workspace and dealing with feelings of loneliness while practicing physical distancing.

Know that the sacrifices you are making now have meaning. Adapting your way of working is helping to keep others safe. Thank you! Here are some ways to protect your mental health.

1. While this situation is not normal, it is important to try to maintain some routine.

For example, try to go to bed and wake up at similar times every day. *“Look at your day and put together a plan of how you can be most positive and constructive. Looking too far toward the future, meanwhile, is not such a great idea. It's best to take things one day at a time.”* – Ann-Marie O'Brien, Professional Practice Lead and Social Worker at The Royal.

2. Set up a designated workspace.

If you have room in your home, make a designated workspace. This helps you to take breaks from your work and feel like you are not always on.

3. Be patient with your self and others in your household.

This is a new situation and it takes time to develop new routines. If you have children at home, they are also dealing with these changes. It is normal for them to have emotional reactions. *“During times like these, the basics are really important – proper sleep, good nutrition, and exercise. Each member of your family will cope in their own way. Remember to give each other space in whatever way you can manage. If possible, have a space that is ‘adults only.’”* – Ann-Marie O'Brien, Professional Practice Lead and Social Worker at The Royal.

For more information on how to support your children, visit our [section for parents](#).

4. Find the humour and joy in the situation.

Maybe it's laughing during a teleconference meeting as you all learn new technology; getting to spend more time with family or learning a new skill. Look for things that make you smile.

5. **Limit the amount of time you spend thinking about COVID-19.**

Staying informed is important. However, to protect your mental health, it is important to limit your time on COVID-19 media. Keep in mind there comes a point when binging on news isn't helpful anymore and can even add to our feelings of anxiety. Dr. Bhatla, Chief of Staff at The Royal, recommends checking your favourite news source once or twice a day and then stepping away from the screen. If you want to stay up to date, go to trusted resources like OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus.

6. **Stay connected with loved ones.**

You are busy when working but you can use some of your time off to connect with loved ones. Call or text your family and friends or stay in touch through social media or online chats. Maybe send a letter to people you don't see often. Self isolation doesn't have to be *mental isolation*. Dr. Andrew Jacobs, a psychologist at The Royal, suggests this might be a good time to rekindle old connections. *"Maybe it's time to call someone you haven't spoken to for months... and to build that community so that you feel that sense of support whether or not you're seeing the person face to face."*

7. **Seek out more support if you need it.**

It is normal to feel the stress and pressure of this situation. If you need support please call the [Distress Centre Ottawa and Region 24/7](https://www.247distresscentre.ca/) - 613-238-3311 in English or [Tel-Aide Outaouais](https://www.247distresscentre.ca/) - 613-741-6433 in French.

[CounsellingConnect.org](https://www.counsellingconnect.org/) provides free access to a same-day or next-day phone or video counselling session. This service is for children, youth, adults and families in Ottawa and the surrounding area. There is no waiting list.

For more support and information visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDMentalHealth.

You are not alone.

We are all in this together!



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