



## Protecting Your Mental Health What if you lose your job?

The current COVID-19 pandemic is a stressful time for everyone. As well as the worry about COVID-19, some people have been laid off and may be struggling financially. We encourage you to use the help available from our [Federal](#), [Provincial](#), and [Local](#) governments. It is also very important to do what you can to protect your mental health.

### 1. Limit the time you spend thinking about COVID-19.

It is good to know what is happening but listening to the news too much can affect your mental health. Make sure to do other things that you enjoy. This will help take your mind off the current situation.

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.

When you do want to know about COVID-19 and how to stay safe, use credible sources of information, such as [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus](https://OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus).

### 2. Keep a routine and daily schedule.

While you may not be waking up at your regular time to go to work, it is good for your mental health to keep a routine. Try to get up and go to bed around the same time every day. Even if you are not going out to work, you can still have a shower and get dressed as if you were.

*“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.

### 3. Eat healthy foods and stay physically active.

Make sure your body gets the healthy food it needs to stay physically and mentally well. Try to exercise regularly as well. You can do a lot of things online like meditations, yoga or other exercise classes. You can also go out for walks if you have not been told to [self-isolate](#), but keep at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people.

Some other ideas can be found here at - <https://www.theroyal.ca/great-big-list-things-can-help-you-cope-while-practicing-physical-distancing-and-self-isolation>

#### 4. **Stay in touch with family and friends.**

Being in self-isolation or even practising physical distancing does not mean that you cannot stay connected. Reach out to your loved ones in other ways. 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. Ask your friends and family how they are coping and talk about how you can get through this together. Digital tools like Skype, Google Hangout, and Facetime are a great way to have face-to-face conversations while maintaining physical distancing.

It's worth repeating - physical distancing does not have to mean emotional distancing!

#### 5. **Focus on the positive and what you *can* do.**

Seek and share positive news stories (but don't forget to take media breaks). Practice gratitude and find new ways to be creative. Ask your family and friends to recommend some fun, enjoyable, uplifting distractions and activities.

#### 6. **This is not a normal time and it is okay to not be okay. Ask for help if you need it.**

It is very important to reach out to any support network you want to discuss how you are feeling – family, friends, colleagues – via phone, email, Facetime, Zoom, or text. More importantly, reach out to your physician if you are feeling unwell. Many physicians are providing virtual appointments, so this may be an option for you.

There is also financial assistance available from the [Federal](#), [Provincial](#), and [Municipal](#) governments.

If you or someone you know is having a hard time coping with the stress of this current situation, please reach out for help. If you need support, please call the [Distress Centre Ottawa and Region 24/7](#) - 613-238-3311 in English or [Tel-Aide Outaouais](#) - 613-741-6433 in French.

[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 resources and information visit [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDMentalHealth](#).

*You are not alone. We are all in this together!*



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