



Protecting your Mental Health

What can you do to stay connected during self-isolation?

Self-isolation is critical in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Self-isolation helps to protect your family, friends, neighbours and everyone else in our community. We must all do our part to keep each other safe.

Although it is the right thing to do, it does not mean it is the easy thing to do. Being in self-isolation does not mean you are alone. You can still stay in touch with those you love, and the outside world. Here are some tips to stay connected!

1. Use technology to reach out.

Connect with family and friends through the phone, texting, video chats and social media. 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. If you are missing games night, play online. Share traditions, sing or dance together. You can even have dinner together on video. Being at home does not mean being alone.

2. Use technology to connect to the world outside.

You can learn a new hobby or activity online. You could try a new exercise class or learn a new skill. Many museums and art galleries have online tours, or you could learn a new language. You can stay physically and mentally healthy by trying new things!

How about a [virtual museum tour](#)? You can also drop by the palace of Versailles.

- Here are [five famous gardens](#) you can visit online.
- NASA has made their [entire collection](#) of images, sounds, and video available and publicly searchable online.
- [Ted Talks](#) are sure to both inspire and educate.
- How about some [backyard birdwatching](#)?
- Get to know [five famous national parks](#) (use headphones for a more immersive experience).
- If you're a night owl, you can stream the Northern Lights from home [on Explore.org](#).
- Audible has made hundreds of audiobooks available for free. Visit [stories.audible.com](#) to get started.

<https://www.theroyal.ca/great-big-list-things-can-help-you-cope-while-practicing-physical-distancing-and-self-isolation>

3. Send a loved one a care package, card or letter to let them know you are thinking of them.

Include things you already have at home like photos or books, or regift something you aren't using anymore. This is a kind gesture and will let your loved one know that you are there for them. Please remember that if you are feeling ill, do not prepare and send care packages. For a list of COVID-19 symptoms, go to [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus](#).

4. Check out services that provide over the phone support.

The Good Companions Seniors Centre offers programs for older adults and adults with physical disabilities including [Senior Centres Without Walls](#) and the [Telephone Assistance Program](#). [A Friendly Voice](#) is a telephone friendly visiting line for seniors offered by Rural Ottawa South Support Services.

Learn about other phone, text, chat and online resources to support your mental health during this time on Ottawa Public Health's [Mental Health and COVID-19](#) webpage. [Bell Let's Talk](#) and the [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health](#) have some great information on coping with stress and protecting your mental health.

Other suggestions that might be a good fit for you include:

- [Crisis Line/Distress Line](#)
- [CMHA](#)
- [Togetherall](#)
- [Bounce Back](#)
- [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#)
- [Ottawa Coalition to End Violence against Women](#)

5. Remember, it's okay to not be okay.

This is a very unusual time and it is completely normal to find it challenging. You are not alone. There are people who can help.

- **Immediate crisis support** is available from [Distress Centre Ottawa](#) and Region 24/7 - 613-238-3311 (Bilingual) or [Tel-Aide Outaouais](#). For children and youth ages 18 and under, please call **Youth Services Bureau's 24/7 Crisis Line** at 613-260-2360 or 1-877-377-7775 (toll free for Eastern Ontario)
- [AccessMHA](#) helps adults to find support for mental health and substance use. Go to [AccessMHA.ca](#) and fill out the online form to get started.
- Use [1Call1Click.ca](#) to access support for anyone under 21 years of age. You can call 613-260-2360 or 1-877-377-7775 (toll free for Eastern Ontario) or use 1call1click website to fill the online form.
- [Counselling Connect](#) provides quick access to a free phone or video counselling session. Go to [counsellingconnect.org](#) to book an appointment.
- The [Walk-In Counselling clinic](#) offers free counselling support without an appointment in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Somali, Cantonese, and Mandarin. Call 613-755-2277 for locations and availability.

For more support and information visit [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDMentalHealth](#).

