

Protecting Your Mental Health

Staying safe while staying social!

COVID-19 continues to present many challenges. We need to continue to take precautions to protect ourselves and others. For up-to-date information on current recommendations on gathering in person go to [Social-Wise.ca](https://www.socialwise.ca).

Consider creative ways to be connect with others without being together in person.

1. Gather with your loved ones, virtually!

Connect with family and friends through the phone, texting, video chats and social media. Digital tools like **Skype**, **Google Hangout**, and **Facetime** are a just a few of the online platforms that allow us to have face-to-face conversations while maintaining physical distancing. If you miss connecting with your family through meals or watching television together, you can still do that. Set up a time to connect over video chat, and have meal, or share a laugh.



2. Games night anyone?

Get a group of friends together through video chat and play your favourite board game together. Challenge your best friend and see if you can sink their battleship or get the group back together for the board game [Codenames](#).

3. Use technology to have a date night.

Check out this [list from the Royal](#) with many different fun and creative things to do online. You and your loved one can take a tour of the Palace of Versailles, visit a famous national park, or watch an interesting TED talk.



4. How about a night in?

Do you miss your book club or paint nights out with your friends? Get together on an online platform and do something you all enjoy! Discuss the latest book or check out some of the fun and [simple painting tutorials](#) available online.

5. Get a Pen Pal!

Many of the ways we recommend staying connected involve technology. Sometimes the simplest forms of communication that can have the most meaning. Remember being a child and being so excited when you got a letter or a card in the mail? Write a letter or send a card or care package. It might just be the start of a new tradition.



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

It is important to ask for support when facing difficult situations. Some of the support available to you include:

- **Immediate crisis support** is available from [Distress Centre Ottawa](#) and Region 24/7 - 613-238-3311 (Bilingual). 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](#) or call [Ottawa Public Health Information Centre](#) at 613-580-6744.

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