

HEALTH IN OUR HANDS!

The Arkansas State University Wellness Program Newsletter
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Staying Connected During COVID-19

Introduction

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) has caused many hardships for everyone across the world. The pandemic has forced us to social distance and isolate ourselves to prevent the spread of the virus. Staying connected with family and friends has been one of the hardest challenges. I will discuss why it is important to stay connected, the effects of not staying connected, and how to stay connected.

Why is it important to stay connected?

Human interaction with others is a vital part of our existence. We as humans thrive off of communicating and forming relationships with others. When you throw social distancing and isolation into the mix of day to day tasks, staying connected with others starts to decline. It is important to stay connected with people to keep our brains stimulated with positive thoughts and actions. Without being connected to others, our mental health will start to take a negative toll on our well-being.

This is why it is more important than ever to maintain staying connected with family and friends. We have to learn to navigate these uncertain times together but with social distancing in mind.



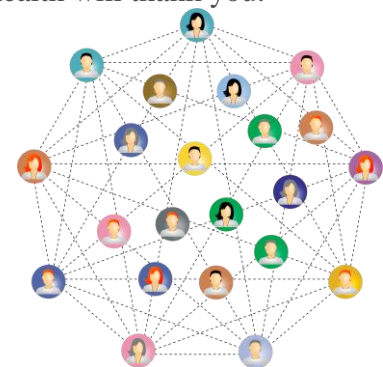
The Effects of Not Staying Connected

Not staying connected to others has negative effects on our mental, social, emotional, and physical health.

Effects:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Stress
- Sleep Disruption
- Impaired Immunity
- Weight Gain
- Impaired Decision Making Skills
- Poor Cardiovascular Function
- Fatigue

Without being connected to others and seeing people regularly, these side effects will continue to increase. The only way to decrease the chance of dealing with one or multiple effects while managing this pandemic is to stay connected with others. Don't shut off your relationships due to the pandemic. You may have to get creative and think outside of the box to stay connected, but your health will thank you.



Ways to Stay Connected

Now let's establish an action plan to stay connected and promote your health and well-being.

Suggestions:

- Schedule virtual visits with family and friends
 - There are many ways to virtually

talk to others. A few ways are through Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, or FaceTime through your smartphone.



- Utilize social media
 - Social media is our advantage in today's society. You can attend virtual exercise classes, live stream concerts or movies, play board games with friends online, or even attend online book clubs.
- Go outside
 - The great outdoors is always available, just remember to keep social distancing in mind.
 - You can go on a run or a bike ride with friends.
 - You can start an exercise class outside with adequate spacing.
 - You can go swimming, kayaking, or hiking.
 - You can sit on your front lawn

and talk with your neighbors.

- Volunteer in your community
 - Helping your community during a hard time is one easy way to give back and help others.
 - You can help out at the local food bank.
 - You can give blood.
 - You can help with outreach calls or visits to those who do not have family close by.
 - You can pick up and deliver dinners and groceries to those that can't get out of the house.



Final Thoughts

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) may have taken away many of our daily routines but it doesn't have to hinder our mental, social, emotional, or physical health. Remember to stay connected with your friends and family as much as you can. Don't let this pandemic win.

References

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- <https://www.icaa.cc/blog/2020-04/10-ways-to-stay-connected-during-COVID-19.htm>

Other News:

**If you have any suggestions for newsletter topics, please contact Dean Susan Hanrahan at hanrahan@astate.edu.

The Arkansas State University Employee Wellness Newsletter is published monthly during the academic year by the College of Nursing and Health Professions. Health questions can be addressed to Dean Susan Hanrahan, Ph.D., ext. 3112 or hanrahan@astate.edu. Produced by Katie Axsom, graduate student in the College of Nursing and Health Professions, Physical Therapy Program.