

## COVID-19

### Psychosocial well-being in a situation of isolation



#### What should I take into account in a situation of isolation, for my well-being:

The best way to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 is social isolation, as it helps to contain the spread of the virus and ensure the safety of everyone. Several practices can be performed in order to reduce the stress and anxiety that this situation can create.

- Feeling stress, sadness, anguish, anger and anxiety is normal. Find out why you are in isolation and understand the importance of doing so. This period will not last forever and has a purpose.
- Perform activities that you enjoy and for which you normally do not have time, take the opportunity to learn something new, reestablish contacts and keep your routine as much as possible, with some necessary adjustments.
- Stay informed, however, avoid paying too much attention to the media. Do not believe in all the information that is shared with you. Choose reliable sources of information, such as the Directorate-General for Health (DGS) and the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Protect yourself and others: talk with your family and friends regularly through the phone or any other online communication platforms.
- Healthy mind and a healthy body: practice simple physical activities, such as yoga, dance or muscle strengthening exercises. Keep a balanced diet.
- Avoid using drugs or alcoholic beverages and try to maintain a regular sleeping and eating schedule during this period.
- Support channels such as the SNS24 line and the DGS and WHO websites are available. Ask for help if you feel the need to do so and offer help if you see a family member in distress. Remember that you are not alone.
- If you are over 70, take special care and avoid going out. Ask a family member or neighbor to help you with essentials, shopping or going to the pharmacy, for instance. Remember that decreasing family visits has a protective purpose and is a temporary measure. Try video calls to communicate with those you care about. Keep a healthy diet, a good sleep schedule and don't forget the medications you usually take. Do not hesitate to ask for help if you have difficulties.
- If you have children in charge, start by explaining what the virus is and how it is transmitted, in a language they understand. Help the children to feel that they can help in the fight against the virus (the cautions we take are a strong weapon in fighting this disease). Explain how children can protect themselves and others, validate their feelings of anxiety, fear, frustration and boredom and encourage a positive attitude (using games, stories, video calls with friends and family), convey hope and security for the future.



#### What can I do to increase resilience in my community?

The negative feelings that the COVID-19 pandemic causes, together with the uncertainty associated with the situation, and the feeling of lack of control, contribute to the increase of erroneous beliefs, stereotypes and social stigma, being a risk factor for social cohesion. Mutual protection and social proactivity is essential:

- Be aware that COVID-19 is a global phenomenon, which can affect anyone, without exception, and everyone is at risk of being infected.
- Strictly comply with the recommendations from the DGS (Directorate-General for Health). Promote, among family and friends, even from afar, the adoption of protective behaviors, such as hands hygiene, respiratory etiquette, social distance and isolation.
- Stay informed and updated by choosing credible sources of information, such as DGS and WHO. Use social networks with awareness and responsibility, and do not share information or images that do not come from credible sources.
- Be aware that misinformation increases stigma and discrimination, which results in an increase in dangerous behaviors that reinforce the spread of the disease. People may not seek health advice on time, may devalue recommendations or try to cover up risky situations and behaviors, because they are afraid of social rejection and violence.
- Be empathetic and supportive. Collective solidarity and cooperation are an important tool in alleviating anxiety and fear.
- Keep a close contact with family, friends and the community through means of distance communication. Do not forget the most vulnerable, most isolated, or institutionalized.

Information from: Ordem dos Psicólogos Portugueses - <https://www.ordemdospsicologos.pt/pt/covid19>