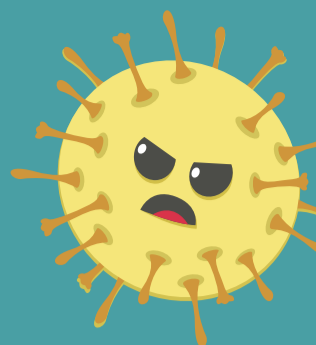


MANAGING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19



LIMIT YOUR BAD NEWS CONSUMPTION

There's enough sad COVID-19 news going around that we could watch, listen to and read about it 24-7. But all that does for us is to keep our brains focused on the negative. While it's important to be informed, don't spend all of your time watching sad news. Give yourself permission to check in twice a day and then spend the rest of your day looking at more positive information.

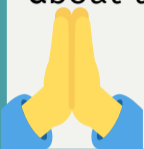


MOVE IT!

Exercise that raises your heart rate can also elevate your mood. Even if you're stuck inside you can still find ways to boost your activity level. Try a YouTube exercise video, tune in to your favorite GoNoodle video, play balloon volleyball against a friend or against a wall, or turn up the music and dance it out. Try it--you'll be glad you did!

START A GRATITUDE JOURNAL

At the same time that we're keeping our thoughts away from the negative, we can steer them towards the positive. Start a gratitude journal! By committing to writing down three to five great things that happened or things that you are grateful for during the day, you force your mind to think about the positive things in your life.



Resolve to start one today!



PET POWER

Maybe it's because they listen without judging (dogs), or they judge everyone equally (cats), but petting a furry friend can help reduce stress and anxiety and raise some of the feel-good chemicals in our brains.

Don't have a pet of your own? See if a neighbor will give you some snuggle-time with their pet in exchange for your helping walk, feed, or brush their pet.



YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE

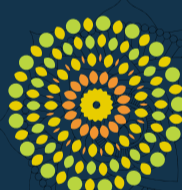
Sunshine stimulates the production of serotonin, one of your brain's feel-good hormones. Serotonin boosts your mood and increases your focus. It also helps your body regulate its wake/sleep cycle. Sunshine helps your body produce Vitamin D, a necessary nutrient.

While you are outside, soak up some fresh air. And give yourself bonus points if you can bask in sunshine, in the fresh air, in an environment with some "nature." Even if it's just a picnic on the grass, it can do wonders for your mood.

MINDFULNESS

Quite the opposite of exercise, being mindful slows down our bodies and our minds. Try a 5-4-3-2-1 technique.

Sit quietly, paying attention to your breathing. Slowly name:
Five things you can see
Four things you can hear
Three things you can touch
Two things you can smell
One thing you can taste



It's not a race! Breathe and enjoy the process.



PLANT YOURSELF

Make your space a little greener and take advantage of feel-good microbes in the soil. Dig around in the dirt and plant some seeds or seedlings. If you don't have a garden, start one on your balcony, or ask your apartment or compound if you can plant some flowers in a border outside.



THINGS TO DO

Keep yourself organized by making a To-Do list of the things you need to do each day. Make sure that you put some fun things on it like: be awesome today, or hug 2 people. It will feel so GREAT to cross things off your list!



SHUT YOUR.... EYES



FOCUS ON SOMEONE ELSE

Think about the people around you. What kind acts can you do that would be meaningful to them? What can you do that can make someone else happy? Focusing on the happiness of others has two benefits--they're happy because you are so nice (and they might be nice in return), and it focuses your thinking away from your troubles and on to someone else (while also releasing those great feel-good chemicals in your brain).

Win-Win-Win-Win!



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