

Staying Connected:

How to prevent

loneliness during the

COVID-19 Pandemic.



The Defining Moment Foundation

*“The loneliness you feel is actually
an opportunity to reconnect with
others and yourself.”*

-Maxime Legacé

**We will get through this together.
We look forward to a healthy future for everyone.**

Thank you,
“Dr. B”

The Defining Moment Foundation
www.definingmomentfoundation.org

Being Alone with our Thoughts During COVID-19



It sounds very simplistic: Just sit quietly, without doing a thing, and relax. Nothing to consider or resolve, just be still. Except, for many of us it is at that very moment our minds get flooded with anxiety producing thoughts. Sometimes, we experience these distracting thoughts happening all at once. It is the mind's way of racing. It could be an anxious projection about the future.

How will we be safe? How will we return to an existence more like the life we shared before this COVID-19 pandemic. Sometimes, these thoughts take up residence in our imagination and refuse to leave, robbing us of the very relaxation we were seeking.

When distracting ideas, worries and feelings continue to race, it is up to us to return ourselves to stillness. One of the most successful tools to utilize is daily meditation.

If we learn how to handle these frenetic trains of thought, we can make sitting with ourselves easier and much more comfortable. Additionally, it can teach us that negative thoughts are just that! -- **thoughts, not realities that we have to run from or fight, and respond to.**

During this Time of COVID-19 there are Certain Obstacles to Overcome in Order to Help Quiet your Inner Voice:

- **Worries about the future:** When unoccupied, the mind often fills in the blanks by strategizing about the future. During this critical time we have to work on ourselves to **stay in the present moment.** While we all realize that our lives may not resemble how things were before the COVID-19 pandemic, **try to stay hopeful for a new future.**
- **Busyness:** We were so tied to our schedules that during this time of social isolation, many of us seem lost without the rigid calendar of appointments, school meetings, work deadlines, social events and doctor's appointments. **The idea that we are either overwhelmed by new additional obligations, or a lack of structure, or feeling alone, can contribute to additional feelings that are racing in your mind.**

Strategies for Success in Quieting your Mind During Covid-19

- **Let go of perfection:** The key to creating a calm and quiet mental space is consciously choosing how you respond to those thoughts – **or whether you respond to them at all.**
- **Be a spectator:** You'll be tempted to track your thoughts, follow their progress and even fight with them, all of which lead to additional internal noise and discomfort. Instead of taking the thoughts and feelings that come into your head as the truth, simply observe them as they come and go, as a movie you're watching - **not as something that is true or inevitable.**
- **Sense your surroundings:** another way to handle disturbing thoughts is to bring your attention to the physical sensations you are experiencing in the moment: the pressure of your body on your chair, the warmth of your hands on your knees, the sounds outside an open window. **By doing these you can immediately bring yourself back into the here and now.**
- **Breathe:** **If your thoughts are particularly negative or anxiety producing,** use conscious breathing to stay focused in the moment and avoid fighting the thoughts of fleeing from them. **Simply taking three deep breaths, counting to five while inhaling and five as you exhale, can help to calm and quiet the mind.**
- **Don't get upset about being upset.** Our lives are forever changed and with that will come a new future. Allow yourself to fully experience your upset **and then release those feelings.**

Once you become more well acquainted with how the mind works, you will be able to see and feel the ways your mind can be directed **towards peacefulness.**

Quieting the mind takes deliberate effort, and through the application of daily meditation you will be able to experience more peace, calm and serenity. These meditations can be practiced with your entire family and on a video chat with friends and colleagues. Try to use this time for reflection and personal growth.

BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF, BE KINDER TO YOURSELF

WE WILL ALL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER



Re-frame your Situation and Replace Negative Thoughts with More Realistic Ones

Is there a way to re-frame your situation and replace negative thoughts with more realistic ones?

Yes, and below are some ideas:

1. **Self-appreciation.** I value myself for who I am, accepting my strengths and weaknesses. I do not label myself in negative ways and choose to see my strengths.
2. **There are people like me out there who share the same interests – I just haven't met them yet.**
3. **Loneliness is a chance to take action.** Sometimes perceived difficulties are blessings in disguise. You can see feeling lonely as a gentle reminder that you need to do something different and make certain changes in your life.
4. **Most people have felt lonely at some point in their lives.** And this is normal. Being surrounded by people is often promoted as 'the way to be'. Yet this is not a standard. There are different ways of being and being lonely is one of these ways.
5. **Loneliness offers me the opportunity to feel grateful for all there is in my life.** The habit of focusing on the negative deprives us of the opportunity to see what's going well in our lives. Just take a breath and count your blessings.
6. **I Love myself the way I am.** Such a simple thing to do, yet so elusive!

**Remember to Love, Embrace, Honor and Respect Yourself.
There is only one YOU!**

Stay in Touch

**Reach out, care about those most vulnerable through digital communication.
By connecting on a daily schedule we positively impact our mental health and
foster our well-being.**

**Lets grow in our humanity
We will all get through this together.**



Staying Connected: COVID-19

Why social interaction is important during this pandemic

STAY CONNECTED

Staying Socially Connected: COVID-19 Why it is Vital for your Mental Health

Are You Feeling Lonely?

The **Cigna Insurance Corporation** created a very informative questionnaire that measures your feelings of loneliness and offers solutions on how to increase your social connections.

Researchers have found that **Loneliness** is a growing public health problem, one that can impact both physical and mental well-being. While **loneliness is not a diagnosable medical condition**, **research has shown that it has the same impact on death rates as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.**

In May 2018, Cigna surveyed 20,000 adults to understand the impact of loneliness in the United States. Cigna's U.S. Loneliness index showed the following:

- **Nearly 50% of Americans reported sometimes or always feeling alone.**
- **One in four Americans rarely or never felt as though there were people who understood them.**
- **Generation Z (adults ages 18-22) is the loneliest generation and claims to be in worse health than people older than them.**

Now More than Ever it is Important to Recognize That:

Everyone feels lonely from time to time, and though it is a normal feeling to have, many people fear the moments of loneliness and start thinking negative thoughts. You can be alone and not feel lonely; yet when you are lonely, this can even be in the middle of a group of people.



**The Difference Between Being Lonely and Being Alone:
Is that Being Lonely Refers to a State of Mind.
Whereas, Being Alone Refers to a State of Being.**

During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, so many of us are really feeling lonely, and many are truly alone. You know you are feeling lonely when negative thoughts like **“why me?”** or **“what did I do wrong?”** or **“will I end up alone in my life,”** start creeping in. We are hearing so many new negative thoughts being expressed by people who feel lost, and whose everyday concerns are enormous, such as. **“I might as well start drinking again”** or **“will my family survive?”** or **“will we have enough money?”** When you feel lonely, you are trapped inside your mind, experiencing all kinds of **intense negative feelings** such as:

- **Sadness**
- **Sorrow**
- **Grief**
- **Regret**
- **Anxiety**

It can feel as if you are trying to rise up from a pool of water, and yet something very heavy keeps forcing you back under and not allowing you to come up for air and enjoy life.

Sometimes, being alone is a personal choice:

- **You didn't want to be in a relationship**
- **You took time off from social activities, or for one day or a specific time**
- **You decided to be all by yourself**

It could be of course, that circumstances led you to be by yourself, but you don't experience it as a negative, hurtful state. Not being surrounded by others, either by choice or circumstances, **may actually feel like an opportunity.**

Maybe you even like being by yourself, so that you can do things you enjoy.

Perhaps being alone is a time:

- **To regroup,**
- **Think about your values,**
- **Your desires,**
- **What you want in a partner**
- **What you seek in a friend**
- **How to best plan to reconnect when you want to do that.**
- **A time to finally meditate**
- **Engage in a hobby**



Why Social Interaction is Important During the COVID-19 Pandemic

A Significant amount of research has shown that social interaction is the key to our mental health and well being. It is one of the best ways to cope and manage the stressors in your life. That's why, so many people are taking advantage of new ways of communicating. Take for example, the recent rise of video chat services. Friends and families are now gathering around screens, celebrating holidays, birthdays and just enjoying time together. We can use this time productively to live in the moment, **utilize our positive coping strategies, and strengthen all of our relationships as we continue to connect with each other.**

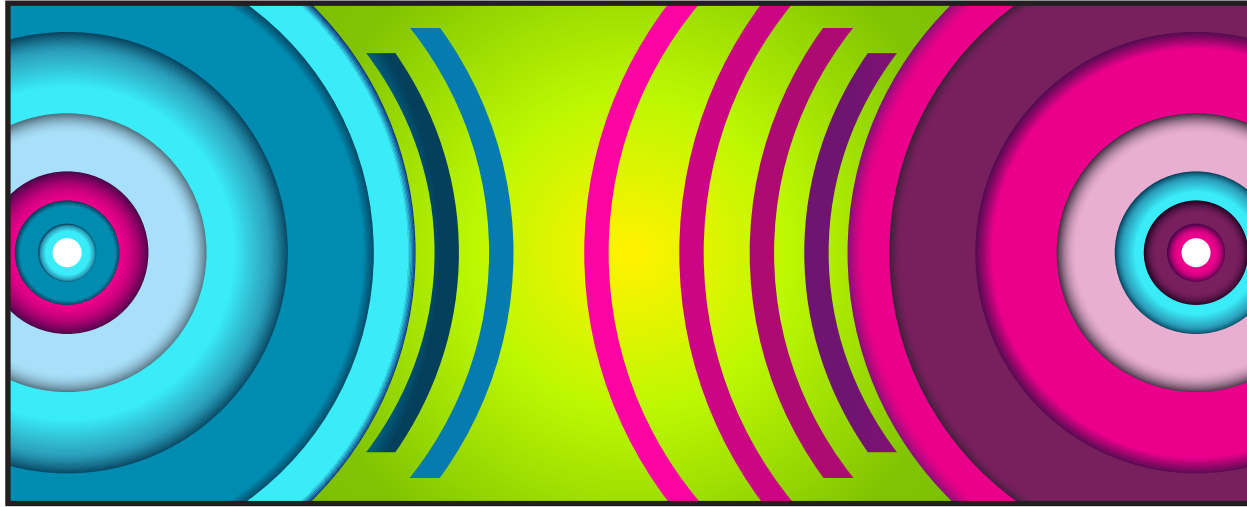
Staying Connected has created a context for linking the entire world emotionally. We long to be with our family and friends. We existed in a world where people routinely would hug and kiss each other in everyday greetings, even in the most casual encounters.

The present lack of physical distance between each other has had a negative impact on our entire society. By remaining in touch on a daily basis with our family, friends and workplace colleagues through the Internet, we are reflecting this new paradigm shift.



***While it is Necessary,
Social Distancing and
Isolation can be Tough,
However,
Right Now, Staying
Socially Connected
is More Important
than Ever Before.***

Always Connected



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How are you planning on staying connected?

Contact:



The Defining Moment Foundation

**No Matter The Challenge,
You Don't Have To Face It Alone,
We Are In This Together.**

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