



Regional Geriatric Program
of Eastern Ontario

OUR MENTAL HEALTH IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS OUR PHYSICAL HEALTH - THINGS WE CAN DO



All Canadians are facing big life changes as we maintain social distancing. Our brains and emotions can struggle to understand and cope with these uncertain times. If you, or someone you love, is struggling to fight off negative thoughts, you are not alone.

There are some things we can do to maintain good mental health

Strategies to stay positive

- Maintain your routine as best as you can
- Limit your time with negative input/thoughts
 - Choose one update from the news per day
 - If you are worried:
 - give yourself 5 minutes (limit to once or twice per day) to worry about it then put it away - this is your worry time
 - write down your worries as they come up and think about them during your "worry time"
 - if you are still worrying reach out and talk to someone about what is on your mind
 - don't feel badly about being worried - it's normal - these tips give you some control over the uncontrollable
- Stay away from people/situations that are negative or drag you down
- Focus on what you can do for yourself

Practice good sleeping habits

- Go to bed at same time and get up at the usual time
- Spend time relaxing prior to going to bed
- Reduce/eliminate activities that make you upset – listening to the news, interacting with difficult situations or people

Maintain a healthy diet

- Eat a balanced diet over the course of the day
- Try to have structured meals/snacks – avoid “grazing” as it can lead to overeating
- Avoid emotional eating/drinking

Stay active

- Maintain daily activities – consider how you can adjust and/or adapt activities to the situation
- Within your home – stand, stretch, bend and walk (in place or around your home). Play music, sing, tell a story or better yet make up a story while exercising
- Work on projects you had put aside – your family history, letters to friends/family, books you have been meaning to read
- Play online games – scrabble, crossword or sudoku

Get some fresh air

- Step outside or open a window for fresh air
- Go for a walk, stand on your porch, driveway, balcony or sidewalk – a hockey stick length apart!
- Schedule this in the day – every day!
- When you are out there each day – notice the subtle changes in nature, the temperature and smell of the air, the animals and the trees, specific to each season. Just as we know the season will change, know that this too shall pass.

Community support are available to help you

- If you are looking to just talk to someone because you are lonely, a Friendly Voice Program has volunteers available to talk. Please call 613-692-9992.
- If you are looking for social events available on the phone, Seniors Centre without Walls: The site has a schedule and phone numbers to call each day, no registration required.
<https://thegoodcompanions.ca/programs-services/expanded-scww-program/>
- It's ok, not to be ok! If you feel that you need help, please call the Ottawa Distress Centre 613-238-3311 at anytime.