Live Well, Work Well

MAINTAINING MENTAL WELL-BEING DURING A QUARANTINE

In response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization have recommended that individuals who may have been exposed to the disease self-quarantine at home for 14 days. In addition, public health officials are recommending that healthy individuals practice social distancing, staying at home to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Following the advice of public health officials can help stop the spread of COVID-19, but if you don't take proper precautions, your mental well-being could suffer while you're quarantining.

If you're self-quarantining or practicing social distancing, keep the following tips in mind to maintain your mental well-being.

Maintain a Routine

One of the best things that you can do to preserve your mental well-being is to stick to a routine. For example, if you're used to going to the gym before work, try to wake up early and get an at-home workout in before you go to work or start your workday from home. Maintaining as much normalcy as possible with your daily routine can help keep your mood as lifted as possible, and prevent boredom and distress from taking over.

If you have children that will be at home now, it's also important to create a routine for them. Whether they are practicing virtual learning with their schools or if they will just be home, you should implement a structured schedule for them so they know what your expectations are. Try to limit as much screen time as possible and incorporate learning activities throughout the day.

Get a Good Night's Sleep

This suggestion goes hand-in-hand with sticking to a routine. While you're at home, it can be easy to go to bed or sleep in later than you typically would. Breaking your normal sleep routine can have negative effects on your overall mental well-being, so you should try to stick to your typical schedule as much as possible.

Spend Time Outside

Unless health officials give you explicit instructions to stay in your home no matter what, try to get outside periodically throughout the day. This could involve going out in your backyard or taking a walk around the block, but shouldn't include going to a park or other areas where large groups of people may be.

Being outside also helps to promote higher vitamin D levels, a vitamin the body makes when skin is directly exposed to the sun. Many people are deficient in vitamin D, so exercising outside can be a great way to correct that.

Leverage the Power of Technology

When in quarantine or self-isolation, it can be easy to feel lonely. Fortunately, advancements in technology have made it easy to connect with others without having to physically be in contact with them. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recommends reaching out to loved ones with technology to reduce feelings of loneliness and anxiety, and to supplement your social life while you're quarantining or social distancing. If you're feeling down, use video calling technology or social media to get in touch with friends and family.

Don't Obsess Over the News

It can be easy to become overwhelmed by watching the news and reviewing the updates of the COVID-19 situation. While it's important to be informed of the situation, you should not obsess over the news. For example, instead of monitoring the news all day from home, consider checking for updates once in the morning and once at night.

Practice Positivity and Gratitude

Taking five minutes a day to write down the things that you are grateful for has been proven to lower stress levels and can help you change your mindset from negative to positive. While you're quarantining or social distancing, it's important to build time into your routine to practice positivity or express gratitude to change your mindset on your situation and boost your mood.

Summary

Your mental well-being plays a huge role in your overall health and well-being, and it should be prioritized. These six suggestions may help you maintain your mental well-being during a quarantine, but shouldn't be considered as medical advice.

If you have concerns about your mental well-being while you're in quarantine, please contact your mental health professional or use SAMHSA's National Helpline by calling 800-662-HELP (4357).