

Couples and COVID-19 Confinement

The COVID-19 pandemic has uprooted every person's routine and introduced mandatory *stay-at-home orders* and quarantines. You may find yourself confined to your home with your partner for an extended and indefinite amount of time. With such a major shift in your daily dynamics, you may start feeling a wide range of emotions—annoyance, frustration, boredom, sadness, or anxiousness—and these emotions can impact your relationship. Below are a few tips to help couples work together through this pandemic:

1. **Communicate.** Currently, things might feel a little more tense than they normally are. You may notice yourself becoming more bothered at the way your partner does certain things or your lack of alone time. It's important for you to communicate these things and your feelings to your partner. If you're feeling overwhelmed and need to devote some time to yourself (going for an hour walk at the beginning or end of your day, or stepping away to video chat with a friend), you should convey that. As chaotic as this situation is, it will help both of you work together more fluidly while stuck at home.
2. **Stay positive, and have fun!** This may sound trite; however, it's important to maintain a positive outlook. Social media and news sources are filled with constant coverage of COVID-19, and after a while, this can become harder and harder to watch. Take a step back from the coverage. Use this time as an opportunity to dive deeper into your relationship and learn more about one another. Discover new activities you can try as a team, or find creative ways to pass the time together, like stay-at-home date nights, cooking something exotic (for you!), puzzles, or board or video games.
3. **Stay connected to family and friends.** While you're isolating with your partner, it's important to stay in contact with your other family and friends. Maintaining these other relationships can help you stay grounded and not feel stifled while remaining at home. So, step outside and video chat with your friend over a cup of coffee, or go on a walk and call your parents or extended family members to check in.
4. **Establish your space, and keep things structured.** This pandemic is a situation that appears to fluctuate day to day. When you're working from home with your partner, this could be a challenge. Establish your own respective spaces for work or leisure, so you both do not feel like you're working on top of each other. While having respective spaces is important, so is keeping a structure to your day. Even if your significant other sleeps in, set your alarm and wake up at your normal time. Walk your dog, brew your coffee, get dressed, or make your breakfast. Do whatever routine works best for you, but stay with this structure. It's also okay if

your partner's schedule deviates from yours, as long as you are respecting each other in the process (taking video conferences in a separate room, turning the volume down on the television or music).

As long as you remember that you are in this together, it's possible to not only survive but thrive as a couple! COVID-19 has made much of everyone's lives uncertain. By working as team and extending greater patience and understanding to each other, your relationship and home can remain a source of stability and comfort in trying times.

Sources

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