

Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine
Center for Wellbeing
900 Main Street, Suite 720
Peoria, Illinois 61602

Debra Disney, MEd, LCPC
Director

Strategies and Tips for Promoting Wellbeing during COVID-19
Center for Wellbeing
April 17, 2020

For many, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social distancing may compromise our capacity for wellbeing, or even be traumatic. Research has identified several conditions that could make an individual more vulnerable to trauma and provides some antidotes to mitigate susceptibility.^{1,2}

Vulnerability	Antidotes
Lack of predictability	Plan your day and your week, creating schedules with activities you look forward to. Live a daily life where you can predict your own day. Embrace daily rituals, such as arising at the same time and having meals at the same time.
Immobility	Avoid destructive habits with the people around you, being aware that risk increases during stressful times. Stress hormones are designed to motivate us to action. Use that energy to cook meals together, gather food, or work in the yard. Exercise. Engage in activities that promote self-regulation (regulation of emotions, behaviors, and thoughts), such as yoga, Tai Chi, mindfulness meditation, and breathing exercises). Consider “Coming to Your Senses” with Licia Sky: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=6&v=i6nq2D7pwmw&feature=emb_logo See: https://www.facebook.com/thebodykeepsthescore/ or the blog at www.besselvanderkolk.com for more resources.
Loss of connection – not being seen or heard	Explore Facetime, Skype, and Zoom. Humans are collective creatures. Interaction with other minds, brains, and bodies; hearing voices of others; and seeing faces of others are primary ways to regulate oneself. Make time for family meals and games, dress-up, charades, story-telling, and music making.
Numbing/spacing out	Avoid endless hours watching TV and listening to news. Instead, mindfully engage in activities that promote a sense of accomplishment and self-compassion. Take a “news break.”
Loss of safety	Seek out activities that make you feel safe. For some it will be touch, cuddling, time with pets, or music, for others it might be a sense of privacy and a place to retreat. Explore self-soothing activities with all five senses.
Loss of sense of purpose	Do things that affirm who you are and sustain your self-identity.

¹ van der Kolk, BA (2014). *The body keeps the score: brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Viking Penguin, USA

² https://catalog.pesi.com/sq/bh_001345_body_keeps_the_score_freeevent_tech-119906?utm_medium=email&utm_source=sp&utm_campaign=040220_bh_c_rt_Bessel_FREEWebcast_tech-glitch_1230pm&spMailingID=32100012&spUserID=MjM2MzQzMjkjyNDQzS0&spJobID=1683093708&spReportId=MTY4MzA5MzcwOAS2