

Staying Connected During Social Distancing – Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre’s Counselling Program.

As the news and social media use words like isolation, social distancing, recession, and quarantine, it is normal to have feelings of increased anxiety, sadness, and confusion. While we may feel powerless as we worry about our health and finances, keeping connected with our community can help us stay mentally healthy.

There are many ways to reach out. Checking in with family, friends, and neighbours through texting, video, or telephone calls helps remind them and us that we are only maintaining physical distance, not emotional distance. At the community level, there are many Facebook groups that provide a place to share requests for assistance or offers of help. Some examples include:

- CareMongering-Ott;
- Buy Nothing Project – check for your community-specific group;
- Religious or spiritual groups for local communities; and,
- Local community groups for parents.

Community members and organizations are offering free ways to connect online, such as watching a live concert, meditating with a group, taking music lessons, participating in an online sing-a-long, or taking a tour of a famous museum or art gallery. There is a growing trend with at home workouts for free floating around social media. Arrange with a friend to “meet up” and chat by phone, video, or text as you look at paintings, struggle to learn a new guitar chord, or go for a walk.

Focusing on your favourite hobby is another great way to connect with people. There is a social media group for everything; a quick search brought up Ottawa groups for birdwatching, pickleball, and quilting. Or connect personally – use video chat to get your family member to teach you that recipe for homemade pasta or practice a new language with a friend.

Connecting with others during this time when we feel most disconnected can help us get through this together.

For more help:

For the most up-to-date information and health guidelines, refer to Ottawa Public Health’s website: www.ottawapublichealth.ca.

For mental health concerns, contact WOCRC at 613-591-3686 x269 during regular business hours, or the Distress Centre of Ottawa is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 613-238-3311 or <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca>.