

The Psychological Effects of Social Distancing

These past few days have been settling in and we are getting somewhat adjusted to the idea of social distancing. As humans, we are in need of social connectivity with one another. When this is removed, we suddenly feel like our power has been taken away. This can only instill a couple of common feelings: FEAR and Anxiety. I have to admit I craved like never before to just go outside and take a run around the block. The craving occurs due to the closures and recommendations to only be outside and around others if necessary. As gyms, restaurants and all social places are closing we now feel more alone than before. This shows how important in the age of social media, texting and less face to face interaction that we are turning on facetime or video chats to interact with someone familiar. When something is removed, the brain registers this as a loss and we tend to crave it more. The anxiety is also related to not knowing exactly when things will be back to normal and the unknown. Three weeks ago, this was not something we were experiencing, and as we can see the situation is changing rapidly by the hour. San Francisco announced they are going on lockdown and our city could be next. My teens are upset that they will be missing their senior prom, senior trips and events. This is a difficult loss to console, but we are all grieving as a country. This social distancing is meant to protect ourselves and our loved ones we all understand this, however the trapped inner feeling is still there. Our mind, body and spirit needs to remain active and in motion. Here are some tips to focus on to get us through this isolation:

1. Get up at your regular time- get dressed and create a relaxed schedule you feel you can handle as a parent even if working virtually from home. Employers are understanding during this crisis as we are handling a new challenge we have not faced before.
2. When you are feeling sad about any loss try to foresee where you will be 3 months from now. Tell yourself what you are feeling now is only temporary.
3. Make a bucket list of things you have always wanted to do within your home. A few weeks ago, you were so busy whether with school, work, and other important things you could have never imagined tackling this bucket list (reading a new book, organizing your room, watching a movie, painting, playing the piano, board games, UNO etc..).
4. Create a family schedule where you can all interact and spend quality time daily.
5. Take a deep breath and have each family member post a positive statement daily where all in your home can see. I know you all got this!