

Don't forget about mental health while at home!



Do you need to deal with the new reality of staying at home? The following advice and tips will help make the experience of this time of isolation due to the COVID-19 epidemic in Québec more pleasant.

The current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and related unprecedented preventive measures have created a different reality, one that can be particularly difficult to adjust to. For some, the measures can make an already difficult situation more fragile for family, financial and/or social reasons. Adjusting and adapting to the new situation requires great resilience.

Many people feel compelled by the situation to experience a period of isolation, while others need to be creative when reconciling telework and family life.

While an event of this magnitude can affect your physical health, it can also have consequences for your mental health by causing stress, anxiety or depression. But there are things you can do to improve how you manage these types of reactions.

Take care of your psychological health

- ✓ **INDULGE YOURSELF.** Give yourself the time you need to adapt. By relying on your personal strengths and the strategies you used in the past to lower your stress or overcome an ordeal, you can get through this difficult time in better ways.
- ✓ **VERBALIZE WHAT YOU FEEL.** Are you experiencing loneliness or worry? Share your inner thoughts with someone you trust while abiding by recommended physical distancing measures.
- ✓ **ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED.** It's not weakness but rather a sign of strength.
- ✓ **SUPPORT OTHERS** while abiding by physical distancing. Helping others in difficult times is as beneficial to the giver as to the receiver.
- ✓ **AVOID ADAPTATION STRATEGIES THAT DON'T WORK** such as tobacco, alcohol or drugs. In the end, they will only impair your mental and physical state of health.
- ✓ **Staying well informed is important, but TRY TO LIMIT THE TIME YOU SPEND LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON COVID-19.** Information overload can raise your stress level and increase your anxiety and/or depression. Always use on reliable resources of information such as the official Government of Québec website: [Quebec.ca/coronavirus](https://quebec.ca/coronavirus)



Letting yourself feel joy is so important

During your period of isolation, it is important to follow a healthy diet, drink lots of water, stay active and get enough rest and sleep. Use this time to discover new passions and focus on yourself and your family.

There are so many activities that can fill up at-home days and entertain you. Make them part of your daily routine by writing a list that you can refer to for ideas on how to stay active at home. Consider posting the list in the house in a place where you can easily consult it. Here are a few ideas to feed your thoughts and help you to remain active:

Indoor physical activities: Ride an exercise bicycle, practice yoga or Pilates, dance, do aerobics and/or weight training, etc.

Creative leisure activities: Draw, colour, paint, write, sing, take photos, do origami, knit, etc.

Games: Play board games, cards, do jigsaw puzzles, crosswords, Sudoku and hidden word games, etc.

Entertainment: Listen to music, podcasts, TV series, movies, concerts, etc.

Relaxation: Take a warm bath, meditate, read a book, etc.

Educational activities: Learn a new language, visit virtual museums, etc.

Other: Cook, sew, tidy up, do housework, sort photos, etc.



Are you teleworking?

- ✓ **SET UP A COMFORTABLE WORK SPACE.** Make sure that the space is only used for your professional activity. This will ensure boundaries between your work and your private life. As much as possible, keep your home office comfortable, clean, nicely set up and airy.
- ✓ **LET YOUR FAMILY CIRCLE MEMBERS KNOW YOUR WORK SCHEDULE.** Explain your expectations to them and listen to what they expect from you. Ensure that they know your work schedule (times when you do not want to be disturbed) and also the times when you are available for them.
- ✓ **SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR CHILDREN.** If both parents are self-isolating at home, divide responsibility for the daily schedule. For example, one parent can be fully in charge of the children's needs in the morning and the other one can take over in the afternoon.
- ✓ **PLAN WORK TIME EFFICIENTLY.** Take advantage of nap time to speak with your workmates by phone. Invite the children to "work play" by drawing, reading or doing educational activities. Ask the older kids to supervise the younger ones when they play.



Staying in contact with your family circle virtually is a great way to overcome isolation

Communicating regularly with your friends and family while practising physical distancing can help improve your well-being during your period of isolation.

Nowadays there are so many ways for you to communicate with your family and friends, workmates and acquaintances: telephone, email, chat, video calls, the Web, etc.

Resources

Stress, anxiety and depression can affect people physically, psychologically, emotionally and behaviourally during times of home isolation. While most succeed in adapting to the situation, it remains important to pay attention to your needs. Never feel ashamed at doing what is needed and take care of yourself.

The following telephone hotlines are always available when you feel stress, anxiety or depression related to the current epidemic in Québec: 418 644-4545, 514 644-4545, 450 644-4545, 819 644-4545 and 1 877 644-4545 (toll-free elsewhere in Québec). You will receive information and be directed to psychosocial health professionals who can provide support and advice that meet your needs.

Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons should dial 1 800 361-9596 (toll-free).

Resources on how to incorporate healthy living habits into your daily life:

- defisante.ca (French)
- force4.tv (French)

Resources for better management of family time:

- ecoleouverte.ca
- alloprof.qc.ca (French)
- teteamodeler.com (French)
- viedeparents.ca (French)
- naitreetgrandir.com (French)
- vifamagazine.ca (French)

Telephone hotlines for people in psychological distress:

- Regroupement des services d'intervention de crise du Québec
24/7 services for distressed people (French): centredecrise.ca/listecentres
- Tel-Aide
Listening centre that provides help 24/7 to people suffering from solitude, distress or who need to have someone listen: 514 935-1101
- Écoute Entraide
Community organization that supports people who are emotionally suffering: 514 278-2130 or 1 855 EN LIGNE (365-4463)
- Telephone assistance service
1 866 APPELLE (277-3553)

[Québec.ca/coronavirus](https://quebec.ca/coronavirus)

1 877 644-4545