

Tips for: **Being Away from Your Support System**

Social Distancing may help us lessen the spread and impact of COVID-19, but it also may leave us feeling isolated and lonely.

While some of us are receiving support in the company of family or other loved ones, some may now be missing their support systems, whether that be friend groups, clubs, or other communities that are now not available in-person.

In addition to contacting the W&M Counseling Center for support (757-221-3620) and utilizing our online resources, here are some basic tips for coping with being away from your usual support system:

Connecting with Others

Reaching out to people you trust is one of the best ways to reduce anxiety, depression, loneliness, and boredom during social distancing, quarantine, and isolation. This reaching out could consist of telephone (including video calling), email, texting, and social media. In particular, this may be a time to utilize social media "for good" (not that you don't already). What I mean is using it for the sharing of your own vulnerability and the expression of compassion and understanding of others, which may lead to a deeper sense of connection with your existing support system and may even expand it in this time in which we all have a sense of confusion and uncertainty in common. One particular tip might be to **schedule times for calls with individuals or with groups** (this can be done via apps like FaceTime, Zoom, HouseParty, etc.). While this may seem initially awkward in terms of "scheduling a meeting," it can set the stage for something more than just passing conversation, for a time to really *meet with* each other.

Your Inner Support System

When spending time alone, you might experiment with ways of relaxing your body and developing **your own inner support system**. Doing things like taking deep breaths (letting the exhale go completely), stretching, creating your own exercise routine or following guided exercises online, meditating (you could attempt to develop a meditation practice using one of the popular free apps online), picking up an old hobby that you used to enjoy but haven't found time for in a while, or try developing a new hobby/skill such as journaling, cooking, or some form art. You may want to pace yourself between activities that you find difficult and those that are a bit easier. And finally, you could share about these individual activities with others in your life, both providing inspiration to others and receiving feedback, motivation, and new ideas from them. We can use this challenging time in a healthy way by **re-centering ourselves with what we find important in life and sharing that honestly with those we care about**.

For brief supportive services during business hours or for crisis services after hours and on weekends call (757) 221-3620 or call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255. For a life-threatening emergency call 911.