

COVID-19: IT'S A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Many of us have been afraid about whether we, or our loved ones, would catch the COVID virus. Any time someone caught a simple cold, the unspoken question was whether or not it was the COVID-19 virus. But the fear extended beyond the health domain and found its way into other areas of our lives. Initially, we saw a run on essentials for the family home as fears centred around having sufficient supplies for extended periods of self-isolation. Now, many of us have become fearful about job security and an accompanying concern about ability to pay one's bills.



We do not know how long it will take to produce an effective treatment or vaccine. And, we do not know what the future will look like on the other side of the pandemic.

When we experience this degree of uncertainty, it is only natural that we may experience symptoms of depression or anxiety. It is also natural that we may feel frustrated over the disruption to our normal routine. We may feel the absence of our family and friends around us, as well as the happy banter of our workplace colleagues.

Moreover, we do not know what the future will hold. We do not know how the world will change, only that it continues to change before our eyes. Once we come out the other end of this pandemic, the world will be forever transformed. The best we can do in this brave new world is to nurture ourselves as well as prepare ourselves for what the future (beyond COVID) might bring. We can also take advantage of our time at home to nurture our most important relationships: Relationships between parents and children, or between life partners. We can also take the time to enjoy hobbies or start that project we had been thinking about for a while. We can also consider learning new skills that could make us more marketable in the long-term.

The articles overleaf provide some practical tips for managing this brave new world. If you need any further help, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Abramson.

KEEPING ACTIVE IN A COVID-19 WORLD

How can we do to keep active in a COVID world?

While our gym memberships are on hold, we can take the time to tend to our gardens, go for a walk, jog or ride a bike. We can also use a set of weights (or equally-weighted cans or drink bottles) to tone our bodies, being sure to attend to each muscle group in turn. Remember to stretch before and after these kinds of exercises so that your muscles have a chance to warm up before hand and cool down after you have completed your routine.

While you are at it, why not spend time exercising your mind. Exercises for the mind give your brain "muscles" something new to explore. The more complex the mind exercise, the better it is for keeping your whole brain nimble. So, completing a sudoku, jigsaw and crossword puzzle is great. So is learning a new language, playing a musical instrument, spending time engaged with a hobby or completing a specific project.

DEALING WITH THE JOYS OF SELF-ISOLATION

One of the joys (or frustrations) of self-isolation is the fact that one has to – well – self-isolate.

Introverts will be quite happy to spend time within their own home, doing their own thing in their own way in their own time. They may be quite happy to spend time in this way and only come up for air when they need to do their shopping. No doubt, the introverts of this world have happily found novels to enjoy, online courses to learn or other activities that will keep them satisfied until they can step out into the world once more.

Extroverts will not be quite so happy with the privacy of their own space. The more extroverted they are, the more frustrated they will feel in not being able to connect with others.

If you are feeling the joys of self-isolation, congratulations and enjoy! If you are feeling the frustrations of self-isolation, you can reach out to family, friends, contacts and colleagues by phone, video, email and snailmail. If you have the time, you can arrange back-to-back conversations. You might even arrange group video calls. And, if you want to combine physical exercise with social

contact, why not arrange to go for a walk with a friend or family member.

DISCIPLINE OF WORKING FROM HOME

If you have found it hard to settle into a routine, when working from home, you may like to experiment with the following:

Set up a dedicated workspace if you haven't already. That space will ideally be located in a well-lit environment where you have unfettered access to needed resources to do your work. Once established, you can make it a habit to do all your work in that space. So much so that if you step out momentarily for one reason or another and receive a call while you had stepped out, you briskly return to that space in order to answer the call.

Dress in your normal business attire, from head to toe.

Pack your briefcase each workday and take it with you to the space you have set aside for work. You can also announce to other family members that you are now leaving for work.

Similarly, at the end of each workday, pack what you would like to take home with you. You can then announce your arrival home and greet your family with a hug and a kiss.

APPOINTMENTS DURING COVID PANDEMIC

Dr. Abramson is available for appointments in her main consulting rooms. She has set up the premises so as to maintain social distancing. She provides a hand sanitizer and disinfects all surfaces between appointments. Appointments are available on Sundays up until 30th September.

Dr. Abramson is also available via video consultation (telehealth). To see Dr. Abramson online, you will need an electronic device with reliable access to the internet. Dr. Abramson will send you a link to a secure, confidential online portal (HealthDirect or Doxy.me). There is nothing to download. Just click on the link to attend the appointment. The portal will ask you to allow access to your computer's camera and microphone before connecting the videocall.