

COPING WITH COVID-19 BRINGING THE FAMILY CLOSER

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The more events and activities that can function as before the pandemic, the better.

COVID-19 has brought the family together as individuals are all practicing safer at home guidelines. This brings challenges as parents are struggling to keep their children active and find activities that can fill the void of school and extracurricular activities. Here are some helpful tips to keep your family active and open a line of communication so that everyone stays mentally and physically fit during these trying times.

HAVING DISCUSSIONS WITH FAMILY

It is important to share with all family members what is going on during this pandemic. Parents should have a discussion with their children about the precautions that have to be taken during this time. This will alleviate a lot of unwanted questions of why everyone is still in the home all day.



Additionally, talking with those adults who are shut in is important. This would be a great time to lay

some ground rules as a family. Discuss needed boundaries during the work hour, how schooling will work, and any new routines. Having routines with children is important and needed to get you through this time. The more events and activities that can function as before the pandemic, the better. This will help the time go by much smoother and be less stressful for all family members.

GETTING OUTSIDE TOGETHER

During this pandemic, individuals may experience times of depression and stress. Getting outside and doing things in nature have mental and physical health benefits.



Create a plan for your family to get outside at least one time each day. This can be done with walking, activities, or just going outside to get fresh air and soak up some vitamin D. Create a scavenger hunt

for children around the neighborhood but remember to practice the CDC recommendation discouraging close contact with others outside of your home. Additionally, individuals can create a picnic with the family once a week.

CREATING MEALS TOGETHER

Families have the opportunity to create a strong bond with each other during this pandemic. Start incorporating the whole family in meal preparation. Find a meal that is appetizing to everyone in the family and assign everyone a task



. Build conversations off the items they are preparing or find something everyone has in common to keep the conversation interesting and fun.

BACK TO THE TABLE

Before the pandemic, the majority of working families may have found it hard to sit together at the dinner table. Now that individuals are home and are



preparing the majority of meals, it provides an opportunity to get the family back to the dinner table.

This may allow the family's bond to grow stronger and provide a place to allow healthy conversations to start. Research shows that children who

frequently have family dinners have an increased chance of having a good bond with their parents and a decreased chance of using alcohol, marijuana, tobacco and other drugs.

FAMILY GAME NIGHT

Bonding over a game is a true pastime. Family game nights are an important bonding tool that can teach so many lessons. Set a day each week that the family will get together after dinner and play a series of games. Make sure to have options as each game may not appeal to everyone. Rotate the games that you decide to play. Let each individual select a game. Allowing everyone to be a part of the planning will increase the chances of this becoming a routine for your family. For the competitive families, a chart tracker can help you keep up with the winners after each game. Think of some creative prizes for the winning individual or teams.



References & Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
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- Litchfield, R. 2015. Say “Yes” to Family Meals. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/pm1842-pdf>

For General Health Information: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
TN COVID-19 Information: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>
TN Mental Health Hotline: 1-855-274-7471
TN Addiction and Recovery Hotline: 1-800-889-9789

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