

## COPING WITH COVID-19

### Being Social While Social Distancing

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*“Cherish your human connections: your relationships with friends and family”*

— Barbara Bush

At a time when most of us have been encouraged to stay home as much as possible, we are reminded how important human connection is. While we’ve struggled to maintain a balance of personal space and connection with the family in our home, we also are missing our other friends and family. Social relationships are connected to positive mental health. We may just need to be creative in how we maintain it right now!

#### **KICK IT OLD SCHOOL**

Remember letters? At a time when a trip to the mailbox is your big outing for the day, give your friends and family something pleasant to pull out. A card, a letter, a postcard, even a package is a nice surprise. Even if you don’t have a lot of news, saying hello and that you’re thinking of them keeps the connection alive. Many people, especially the younger generations, don’t like talking on the phone anymore. However, that may be the best way to check on friends and family, especially older adults.



Make a schedule to remind yourself to call occasionally. If you don’t have a lot to say, write down some memories to relive or jokes to share.



#### **AT YOUR CONVIENENCE**

This is a busy and strange time for all of us. Many people are working from home and some may be educating their children while schools are closed. There are plenty of ways to keep in touch, however, that can be done when people have a moment to spare. Emails, texts, and chats can be sent during breaks in your work. You can even send a video. It is important to remember,

however, that the person you are communicating with may have different break times. Don't take it personally if it takes them a bit of time to return the communication. This is a great way to reach out to people that you haven't talked to in a while. Reconnecting with people from your past is one of the silver linings of this pandemic. Updating your information and checking in on others can also be done through social media such as Facebook or Instagram. Remember to be real, this isn't a time for trying to convey the "perfect" family. It is, however, a great space to give hope to others.

### REAL TIME TECHNOLOGY



Although families and friends are separated into different homes, there are still ways to spend time together. Skype and video chats enable you to see and hear each other. Zoom has free accounts where you can invite a large number of people to connect at one time. Make sure you

use good etiquette any time you use video. Dress appropriately and be aware of what is in your

### FINAL THOUGHTS

Humans are social animals. Staying home doesn't have to mean being cut off in the age of technology. Connect with the people you love so you can support each other and bring each other joy. Be real about how you're feeling but be careful not to fall into a rut of only complaining. Use your connection to play games, share ideas, collaborate on goals, or just have some fun. Don't forget the people that may not be as connected as you are. This can be a scary and lonely time for some people. Reach out and spread joy. As Mark Twain said, "to get the full value of a joy, you must have somebody to divide it with."



background. There are now additional security features on zoom to make sure only those invited can join the meeting. Additionally, Apple, Google, and Social Media platforms have face to face capabilities. The number of online game nights, happy hours, and book clubs has grown tremendously!

### GET FANCY

If you are feeling adventurous, learn a new technology to stay connected. TikTok is a popular way to send a fun video of yourself singing, dancing, or performing in some way. Marco Polo is an app that can send a few seconds of video message to someone. Snapchat is similar but the messages usually disappear after they are viewed. If you're up to learning something new, explore the new apps out there. Do a bit of research first, however and check out privacy policies.



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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