

COPING WITH COVID-19

Keeping the Romance Alive

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“The very essence of romance is uncertainty.”

— Oscar Wilde

For many couples, the focus lately has been on the practical needs of making it through the COVID-19 pandemic. Kids are home all the time, needing help with school or wanting to be entertained. Couples are around each other constantly trying to work from home. For many, romance has taken a backseat and people may need help remembering the times that they were excited by their partner. Below are a few items to relight the fire in the relationship.

CREATE INDIVIDUAL SPACE

Couples are spending more and more time together. Many people are working from home and fewer people are going out for recreation. Additional time with your partner doesn't necessarily increase your connection. Create separate work areas and engage in some separate activities. This will make the time you choose to spend together more enjoyable since you'll have time to recharge on your own. Different individuals have different coping methods, such as needing to be on their own to calm down. Others may also have different obligations. If one partner has more work or family stress, they may need the time and space to take care of things without the other partner adding extra stress. Try to give one another grace when handling competing priorities.



SURPRISE!



When couples have been together for a number of years, it's normal to start taking each other for granted. To reignite the romance, you have to make an effort. Go back in your mind to the beginning of the relationship. Make an effort to “date” them again. Be creative. Put little notes around the house to tell your partner what you like about them. Get dressed up for a date at home. Do one of their regular tasks for them as a surprise like vacuuming, grocery shopping, fixing breakfast. This is also a perfect time to start something new together. Learn a new language, pick up a new hobby or tackle a project you've been talking about. Just make sure that it is something that will be enjoyable and bring you closer together, rather than something that will add stress or tension.

SETTING TIME ASIDE WHILE CHILDREN ARE IN THE HOME



Children take up a lot of time for managing work and home at the same time. Create healthy boundaries on when you are going to spend time

together. When you set the boundaries, stick to the schedule. After a long day of work and children you may be tired, but having the conversation with your partner beforehand will keep the fire burning. You are communicating wants and showing your partner that time with them is important. Children can respect time for parents to be alone if they are prepared ahead of time and have a plan for what to do. Depending on their age, you can set them up with a movie and snacks. You can also create an early bed night regularly so that you have couple time before the adults are too tired to enjoy themselves.

LEARN YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE

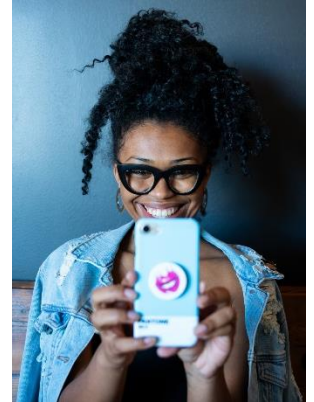
Like speaking a different language or having a different accent, many of us speak and show love through different languages. Often couples do not share the same love language, so they must make an effort to show love in a way that considers their partner's needs and wants. Choose a night when you can be together alone to learn one another's love language. Take the quiz online then discuss your primary love language. Reflect on your similarities and differences in how you like to "be loved" and how you tend to "show love." Discuss what you can do to be sure you "speak" you partner's language more often. Visit <https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/> to learn more!

FINAL THOUGHTS

Stressful times and too much togetherness can take a toll on relationships. Couples need to make a clear decision to maintain their connection and offer support for each other. Healthy couple relationships make for strong families. It takes less effort to maintain a relationship than it does to fix one once there are problems. Healthy relationships have mental and physical benefits for the couple and any children. However, healthy relationships require some thought and effort, especially during stressful times. Taking time for your relationship isn't selfish, it's essential.

CLOSE WHILE FAR AWAY

Occasionally couples can not be together physically. If you live separately from your partner or have to isolate from them, there are still ways to maintain your relationship. With technology, you can feel like you're together. Watch a movie together on a video call. Send an email or text periodically throughout the day to let them know you are thinking of them. Write a love letter on nice paper and mail it or slide it under the door. Deliver a package of homemade treats or items for them to pamper themselves.



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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