

Beating Cabin Fever

All of us are being impacted by the temporary shutdowns and physical distancing. We need to do our part to take care of ourselves and our families. This week I want us to look at some practical ways to help us through this time. Our mental health is important and the stress of this event can, in some ways, be as dangerous as the virus. How can I take care of myself and as a care giver take care of those I care about?

What can I do?

- 1) Social distancing does not mean emotional distancing; use technology to connect widely; (Stay in contact with friends family and church members).
- 2) Clear routines and schedule, seven days a week, at home—don't go overboard; (Have realistic expectations of what you can accomplish).
- 3) Exercise and physical activity, daily if possible.
- 4) Learning and intellectual engagement—books, reading, limited internet.
- 5) Positive family time—working to counter negativity; (Laugh together).
- 6) Alone time, family is great but you may need to take a break, outside if possible, but inside too; but remember, don't isolate—staying to long alone.
- 7) Focused meditation and relaxation; (Do whatever helps you relax).
- 8) Remember the things that you really enjoy doing, and can do in this situation, and find a way to do them.
- 9) Limit exposure to TV and internet news; choose small windows and then find ways to cleanse yourself of it.
- 10) Bathe daily, if possible, to reinforce the feeling of cleanliness.

Things to Remember:

- Things will get better eventually, and back to normal; the world is not collapsing (don't go "catastrophic").
- Most people are good, and people are going to persevere and help each other.
- You're tough, you've overcome challenges before; this is a new one.
- This is a particularly strange and unprecedented situation; humor helps once in a while.
- If having obsessive or compulsive thoughts related to the virus, or the broader uncertainty, wash your hands once, and then remind yourself that anxiety is normal in this scenario. But the mind can also play tricks on us. Try to breathe and move the internal discussion on.
- Live in the moment, think about today, less about the next three days, even less about next week; limit thinking about the next few months or years, for now (Information taken from Partners In Health www.pih.org)

We all have feelings. But when they overwhelm us, not only do they impact us, but also all those around us. As parents, we have a special burden. Our children are looking at how we are reacting and will mirror our response. Remain strong in your faith in God and take care of yourself and your family.

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