

# Supporting each other through uncertain times



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CANBERRA & GOULBURN

There for any human

Many couples are spending more time together while dealing with the stress of adapting to the restrictions, change and uncertainty. Below are some tips for maintaining a healthy (and loving) relationship during these uncertain times.

## Label the uncertainty

Acknowledge and label the changes and losses as uncertain. There may be other labels you would like to give them too, such as “out of the ordinary”. This enables you to gain some perspective and put any stress or tension into context.

## Share your feelings and concerns

It can be helpful to have a conversation about how the uncertainty and other challenges are impacting you. Simply state how you feel and what you are worried about, and listen to your partner’s feelings and concerns without judging or giving advice. This can improve understanding and empathy. Remember too that it is normal to have different perspectives and feelings.

## Give space when needed

It is also important for each of you to have your own time and outlets such as walking on your own or reading a book. Communicate to your partner when you need some time alone so they can respect and support you in that. If you have children, then give each other time away from the children to recharge.

## Spend quality time together

Make time to connect in a positive way. This may involve creating new rituals and thinking creatively about how you can enjoy some time together.

## Establish routines

Work together to reconstruct your daily routine. If you have children, get them involved in the decision making as well. This will bring structure into your lives and help everybody know what to expect each day, and who will do what.

## Realistic expectations

Be realistic in that we cannot be productive all the time, and that this is OK. Recognise that each of you are managing in your own way, and at any point, one or both of you might be struggling. Check-in with each other regularly, and adjust the routine or expectations as needed.

## Kindness

Most importantly, be kind to yourself and your partner. Be considerate of each other’s fears and concerns for other family members, work stress, parenting challenges and financial worries. If you’ve been arguing with your partner over a particular issue, consider calling a truce during this period. Accept that at times we will feel irritable, stressed, upset and sad and bear with one another patiently.

## Get help if needed

If your relationship becomes abusive, make sure you access support to stay safe. In the ACT contact the Domestic Violence Crisis Service: [dvcs.org.au](http://dvcs.org.au) or phone 6280 0900. In other States or Territories call 1800RESPECT.

## Ideas for spending time together

- » Enjoy breakfast or dinner together without screens or phones.
- » If working from home, take breaks together.
- » Watch a movie or go on walks together.
- » Listen to or dance to some music.
- » Have a date night at home such as ordering take away from your favourite restaurant. You may like to dress up for the occasion.
- » Attend online events together such as live music streams, workshops or exercise groups.
- » Play cards or board games together. You could try playing games you don’t normally play such as Truth or Dare.
- » Try something new together such as yoga or line dancing.

As a result, focusing on your relationship goals and interactions to support basic physical and emotional well-being is vital during this difficult times. In essence, by meeting each other’s needs for health, safety and emotional connection, you and your partner can create a deeper and more satisfying connection.