



# COVID-19 : Let's protect our mental health too!

## Caring for your couple's relationship

Current exceptional circumstances due to the pandemic and its unprecedented prevention measures could disrupt your couple's balance, test it and even strain it. For your sake during quarantine and your couple's relationship's survival, there is one key quality: flexibility. It is also a unique opportunity to spend more time with your life partner and to savour beautiful moments together. Below are some tips to help you deal with the situation in a healthy way:

### ➤ **Communicate (the best cement of a couple's relationship is communication)**



- Take a few minutes to speak with your life partner everyday;
- Learn how to communicate effectively;
- When sharing with your partner, be clear, open and kind (remember your partner is as exhausted, infuriated, frustrated and worried as you are);
- Express your emotional needs, wishes, opinions or your way of seeing things;
- Have conversations about how you are coping with the situation;
- Kindness and moral support are key.

### ➤ **Spend time together to take care of your relationship**



- Devote time to your couple's relationship only (daily! While sharing a meal, doing house chores together or your favourite activities);
- Live in the moment, enjoy the here and now of life, the small things (e.g. morning coffee);
- Show your life partner that you care with small acts (neck massaging, sending a text message just to say that you are thinking about them etc.);
- Have a daily routine for the couple (getting up at the same time, having dinner just the two of you once children are asleep etc.);
- Make plans for activities together;
- Maintain intimacy in your relationship;
- Take care of your partner without losing yourself;
- Find balance between time for your couple and time for yourself.

### ➤ **Each person should have "alone time" see document on Self-care)**



- We all need Alone Time, time for oneself;
- Be patient and take a step back;
- Go for a walk or read a book;
- Solitude helps in finding balance in your life;
- Spend time alone to maintain or revive desire.

➤ **Make compromises**



- Acknowledge and accept your partner for who they are;
- Agree on what is essential/what really counts;
- Remember life partners do not have to agree on everything.

➤ **Stop and think about your relationship**



- Take time to think about your relationship, it is the best time to do it;
- Acknowledge and highlight what you love about your relationship;
- Mention behaviours you like and the ones that need improvement/change;
- Express what your expectations are for the quarantine.

➤ **Avoid personal criticism**



- Remember it is natural to get overly frustrated about certain things as you spend way more time together than usual (e.g. dirty laundry on the floor, the way cookware is placed in the dishwasher etc.);
- Remember that current exceptional circumstances call for indulgence towards one another;
- Show acceptance, tolerance and appreciation;
- Do not forget to put a little water in the wine.

**Keep an eye out for signs of distress. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness! If you feel overwhelmed, for whatever reason, or if you/one of your loved ones is in distress, or if an intervention for domestic violence is necessary, you can use any of the resources below:**

- **Psychosocial Help Line : Info-social 811**
- **S.O.S Violence conjugale : 1-800-363-9010**
- **CALACS : 1-888-933-9007**
- **Suicide prevention hotline : 1-866-APPELLE (277-3553)**
- **Essential Services Directory : <http://ressortgim.ca/covid-19/> (in French)**
- **Mental Health resource Guide for the Gaspé Coast and the Magdalen Islands : [https://casa-gaspe.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Mental-health-Guide\\_May9.pdf](https://casa-gaspe.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Mental-health-Guide_May9.pdf)**

Resources	
<p><b>To deal with anxiety better:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en">https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://ecolebranchee.com/">https://ecolebranchee.com/</a> (in French)</li> <li>• <a href="https://carrefour-education.qc.ca/">https://carrefour-education.qc.ca/</a> (in French)</li> </ul>	<p><b>For a healthy lifestyle:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.dietitians.ca/News/2020/Advice-for-the-general-public-about-COVID-19?lang=en-CA">https://www.dietitians.ca/News/2020/Advice-for-the-general-public-about-COVID-19?lang=en-CA</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.defisante.ca/">https://www.defisante.ca/</a> (in French)</li> <li>• <a href="https://move50plus.ca/">https://move50plus.ca/</a> (in French)</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/protecting-your-well-being-in-the-covid-19-pandemic/">https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/protecting-your-well-being-in-the-covid-19-pandemic/</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>To manage family time better :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.ecoleouverte.ca/en/">https://www.ecoleouverte.ca/en/</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.alloprof.qc.ca/">http://www.alloprof.qc.ca/</a> (in French)</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.teteamodeler.com/">https://www.teteamodeler.com/</a> (in French)</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.viedeparents.ca/">https://www.viedeparents.ca/</a> (in French)</li> <li>• <a href="https://naitreetgrandir.com/fr/">https://naitreetgrandir.com/fr/</a> (in French)</li> <li>• <a href="https://vifamagazine.ca/">https://vifamagazine.ca/</a> (in French)</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.elaborer.org/covid_enfant.pdf">http://www.elaborer.org/covid_enfant.pdf</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Other sources of information :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.thepharmafist.com/">http://www.thepharmafist.com/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.cyberaide.ca/app/en/index">https://www.cyberaide.ca/app/en/index</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://kidshelpphone.ca/?_ga=2.82577878.1369731909.1591822880-1224784992.1591822880">https://kidshelpphone.ca/?_ga=2.82577878.1369731909.1591822880-1224784992.1591822880</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.ligneparents.com/LigneParents">https://www.ligneparents.com/LigneParents</a> (in French)</li> <li>• <a href="https://www.teljeunes.com/Accueil">https://www.teljeunes.com/Accueil</a> (in French)</li> <li>• <a href="https://ampq.org/info-maladie/covid-19/">https://ampq.org/info-maladie/covid-19/</a> (in French)</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.espacesansviolence.org/gaspesielesiles">http://www.espacesansviolence.org/gaspesielesiles</a> (in French)</li> </ul>

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**RÉFÉRENCES :** Association des médecins psychiatres du Québec. (2020). *Info maladies: COVID-19*. <https://ampq.org/info-maladie/covid-19/>; Center for Addiction and Mental Health. (2020). *La santé mentale et la pandémie de COVID-19*. <https://www.camh.ca/fr/info-sante/mental-health-and-covid-19>; CISSS Chaudière-Appalaches. (2020). *Prendre soin de nous : des outils et des trucs*. <https://www.cisssca.com/index.php?id=3033>; Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux. (avril 2020). *Publications du ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux: COVID-19*. <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/sujets/covid-19?page=2&date=DESC>; Ordre des psychologues du Québec. (2020). *Pandémie de la COVID-19 : conseils psychologiques et informations au grand public*. <https://www.ordrepsy.qc.ca/coronavirus-covid-19-conseils-psychologiques-et-informations-au-grand-public>.