

Tips for Maintaining Sanity Amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic

In addition to the Covid-19 pandemic, we are all impacted by the imposition of social distancing, movement restrictions, schools and businesses closing and a major financial downturn with no real sense of when this will end or the long-term consequences. SentWell wants to provide you with a handful of tips to first, take care of yourself which will then enable you to take better care for others (“We can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive” 2 Cor. 1:4).

Attending to your internal world:

Decrease...

- Boredom—We can often find ourselves with unexpected time on our hands which invites ruminating, worry and before we know it—we are surfing the web. Structure your days and have healthy choices for what to do with down-time (call a friend, clean out a junk drawer, go for a walk, learn a new skill).
- Options—When major changes come, we can get overwhelmed with all the new decisions we have to make and, over time, decision fatigue sets in. Take time to set new routines and healthy habits based on the new circumstances you find yourself in.
- Inactivity—Your gym is closed, can’t walk with your friend, or you’ve just lost motivation, but this is critical to maintaining our sanity in a time of stress. Our bodies were made to move—find a new exercise outlet and daily regimen asap (Youtube videos, ask a house-mate to join you, but do something!)
- Temptation—During these times we become especially vulnerable to those annoying besetting sins. Be clear about those points of weakness (gluttony, complaining, critical, anger, pornography, bitterness), put protections in place and when if you fall, be quick to own it, ask for forgiveness (confess to someone) and receive the grace that is yours.

Increase...

- Time outdoors or near windows—clinically proven to increase your mood
- Perspective—fluffy distracting Netflix binges are ok, but try to be intentional about choosing uplifting, perspective giving media as well (Art, Music, documentaries, etc.).
- Humor—Reminds us that we are children under the Father’s watchful eye and need not carry the weight of the world on our shoulders. Linger after a meal and tell funny family stories—what was your most embarrassing moment?; Challenge others to find the funniest YouTube video and put each to a vote (maybe make one of your own and send it to your friend/family group).
- Gratitude—So easy to miss out on all the blessings we have in the midst of a crisis. Start a Gratitude poster in the kitchen. Make it a routine after dinner or before bed.

- Time to catch up to yourself—In stressful times, we lose track of ourselves. How do you best reconnect with yourself (Journal, long hot bath, Examen at end of the day)?

Attending to your external world:

Decrease...

- News—set one or two times a day to check on relevant news (including unwanted news you get from that relative that's freaking out) and set a time limit. Try not to do it right before bed.
- Cluttered and disorganized living space (think spring cleaning, clean out a closet or garage and donate what you don't need)—helps you feel productive and increases the enjoyment of the space.
- Time with Apartment/House-mates—even if they are family, make sure to give each other space and be intentional about when you do have time together (Coffee together by the window in the bedroom).

Increase...

- Education—find reputable sites to learn about how to care for yourself and loved ones during the pandemic.
- Fun—Realize you might not want to do this initially, but as you begin to play, it has great payoffs. Join a social media game with friends (i.e. quiklash), Silly house-mate challenges, pull out the board games, pick up an old, or start a new hobby.
- Social contact—Find a balance between: 1) having people caring for you (if you don't have anyone, consider asking someone to mentor you), 2) have mutual relationships that minister to you; 3) have people you are concerned about/caring for. Expand beyond texting to include more personal audio or video calls.
- Serving others—you may not be able to assist others in the ways you have been but don't let that stop you from finding other ways. Consider the most vulnerable, most anxious, most lonely, and those in proximity to you.
- Grace for others—none of us are at our best during stressful times. Keep short accounts: “quick to listen, slow to anger and slow to speak” James 1:19