

CARING FOR YOURSELF

by Rape Crisis

A busy mind and intense emotions are very much a part of recovering from trauma. How do we stop the wheels of a frantic mind from circling and calm our anxiety down in a time of confinement? There are three simple ways to do this:

Meet basic needs, quiet the mind, and stay connected.

The three most basic needs we all have are food, exercise and sleep. Making sure that you eat the right foods at regular intervals will help your body adjust to the strange new normal. Living in confinement means that our bodies do not move in the same way and we need to set up purposeful movement for this lifestyle. If you are sitting for longer than half an hour get up and walk around, make some tea, stretch. If you have children, involve them too. Put music on and dance. Follow an online exercise class. Grab a skipping rope. Throw a ball. Walk to the shop for those essentials.

MEET BASIC NEEDS

Find something that helps to calm your racing thoughts. These thoughts can create distress and can even feel catastrophic at times.

Mindfulness practice is a technique that helps you stay in the here and now by focusing on one task at a time. It can be any task at all from making your bed to writing a shopping list. Do it slowly with all your attention. Try to complete it fully. Do it as well as you possibly can. If your mind wanders, bring it back and carry on with the task at hand. You may already know something that you did in the past that helped. Slow creative tasks that demand concentration like knitting, embroidery or crochet can help as can drawing or colouring in. Try it out.

QUIET THE MIND

Your social support networks are very important to your recovery. This is not about having a large circle of friends or being part of many different groups. We are talking here about quality support. Having that one person that you can call or send a text message to on a whim and you know they will always reply. That one person who gets you. This person might not fully understand what you are going through but is at least able to listen without judgement. We all need to be a bit creative about how we do this during lockdown, especially as some people are not in spaces that guarantee privacy. Call or text your person or an organisation offering support services. Small connections are just as important as the deeper ones. Talk to your neighbour over the fence or through the window. Speak to the cashier when you go out to shop.

STAY CONNECTED

If you have been in counselling or you feel that you would like to speak with a counsellor, reach out. Now just like any other time is important, take care of your mental health. It can be helpful to speak with a counsellor so that you do not feel so alone and with painful thoughts. The Rape Crisis helplines are available at any time of the day or night.

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