



Hope-Filled Ideas For Social Connections

Serving Leaders in Life

Pastor: During times of social distancing, staying connected can be difficult. The current Coronavirus crisis has many of us avoiding any contact with those outside of our immediate family. We have food and groceries delivered. We watch our church services online. We avoid any neighbors that we may see on the sidewalk.

[Tips from the Happify Researchers](#) (click on link to see entire article)

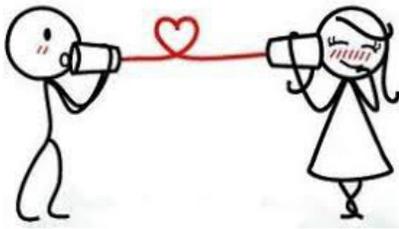
An important **RELATIONSHIPS** issue relates to *maintaining* our relationships through this time. Below is a link to important tips from Happify research about how to stay social and safe during this.

Stay Social Virtually

“[Social connections](#) are widely known to be important to life satisfaction, but we often forget they’re a crucial buffer to anxiety and depression,” says Matt Sosnowsky, LICSW, a therapist and Happify’s manager of digital therapy. “In times like this, although a lot of things are largely out of our control, often we can still choose how we spend our time.”

Interactions with friends, family, and co-workers can help boost our mood, but with social distancing becoming the new norm, staying connected now may require a bit of extra planning—and Wi-Fi. Set regular communication dates with the people you miss most. Take stock of their various strengths, so you know what to expect—some friends are good listeners, while others are better for comic relief.





Talking on the phone is fine, but with video calls you can actually enjoy doing activities with your pals such as following the same dinner recipe from separate kitchens.

If you sort of wish you were home alone—rather than cooped up with roommates, kids, parents, or a partner—take time for yourself as needed. Wearing headphones, going into separate rooms, or mandating quiet times may help you create your own tranquil space, even in the most chaotic environment. When you need to vent, stick with the adults. When you need distraction, devise some playful activities, such as dress-up with the kids. When times get tough, practice patience and compassion.



Connect with your kids:

Children express their concerns and anxieties in various and often different ways than adults. Sometimes, they are **overly quiet**, **overly active**, or **acting out** in various ways. Increasing caring connections helps **calm** children and teens. Below are a few practical suggestions:



- Learn to say, “I love you” in several different languages and surprise your child with those words of affection. You might even make it a theme. Have tacos and start your meal with, **“Té amo mucho.”** Serve spaghetti and express your love with, **“Ti amo!”**
- Write your child’s accomplishments with shoe polish on the windows of your car. Brag to the world about the wonderful kid who’s in the car with you.
- Do something silly and surprising this week. Launch a water gun fight or wear a wig and clown nose to breakfast.
- Initiate a tickle session in the morning or offer to wrestle after the homework is done.



- Blow bubbles with your preschooler. As you pop each bubble, make up a funny nickname that will enhance your child’s image of himself.
- Text your teen and surprise them with the words, “I’m so glad I get to be your Mom/Dad. I couldn’t have asked for a more special son/daughter.”
- Use chalk to write your child’s name, followed by the words, “I love you in a big way!” Write your message on the driveway or sidewalk!

