

SPECIAL  
 NEWSLETTER  
 ON CORONA

Psychological support  
 in challenging times

# HEALTHY PEOPLE – HEALTHY BUSINESS

Nr. 17 | 2020



Dear reader,

There has been a very dynamic development of the corona pandemic in the past few weeks. Not only the concern for Personal health, the health of relatives and friends, but also the very strict measures of „social distancing“ can become a psychological burden these days. Domestic quarantine and prohibition of contact is an exceptional situation from a psychological point of view.

Fortunately there are scientifically researched and proven behavioral measures as well as mental strategies for an exceptional situation such as this. These measures can help us master an “out of the ordinary” daily life.

In today's special edition newsletter, we have put together some tips which can help you and your family members master this challenging time.



## General tips

### Adhere to a daily structure

- ▶ A daily structure prevents chaos, provides security and strengthens in stressful situations.
- ▶ Our daily structure is comparable to a ritual. Therefore don't wear pajamas during your home office work. Get up at the usual time, get dressed, and stick to your habitual eating, sleeping and working hours. The daily routine also applies to children and teenagers during their „Corona Holidays“ and should include learning times.
- ▶ Plan your day as precisely as possible. An actively planned day gives you the opportunity to shape your current situation and can prevent a feeling of helplessness.
- ▶ Plan fixed activities to avoid boredom.

### Consume media in a conscious and targeted manner

- ▶ Facts help prevent exuberant emotion.
- ▶ Reliable and clear information provides you with orientation and security.
- ▶ Set yourself limits and refrain from reading circulating e-mails, videos, WhatsApp messages and social media messages related to COVID-19.

### Move

- ▶ Movement has a positive effect on our mental situation. It is scientifically proven to have a positive effect on our psyche.
- ▶ Exercise in fresh air is particularly beneficial. Therefore go for a walk, jog, or ride your bike ...
- ▶ A daily workout is also possible at home and indoors - videos on the Internet provide efficient training programs.

### Maintain your social contacts

- ▶ A close (non-contact) connection to family or friends can give you support.
- ▶ Feel free to use either your phone or a video chat.
- ▶ Pay attention to maintain a positive content during your conversation:  
„What made you happy today?“

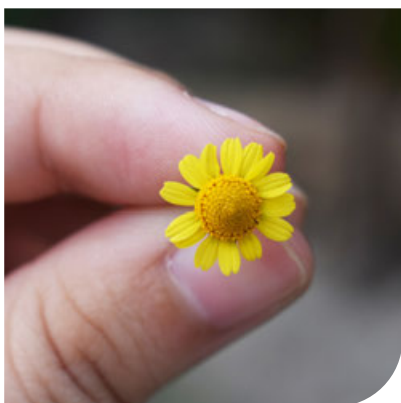


### Counteract against conflicts

- ▶ Due to the unusual amount of time together, conflicts in partnership or in daily family life can arise. In the worst case these conflicts can result in disputes or even acts of violence.
- ▶ Therefore define clearly defined hours which everyone can spend on their own.
- ▶ Express your anger before a situation escalates.
- ▶ Be more lenient than usual - towards yourself and others. The situation is a challenge for everyone.

### Be conscious of your strength

- ▶ You have internal resources which are reinforced by positive experiences in your life as well as problems you have overcome and solved in the past. These resources are enlarged by your personal strength, skills, talents etc. and can help you endure crises situations.



## What to do against worries and fear?

New stresses and out of the ordinary emotions can arise in extraordinary times. It takes time to get used to these new circumstances and challenges.

### Put limits to your consumption of media

- ▶ See above

### Be aware of your feelings and talk about them

- ▶ It is normal to feel confusion, fear or stress in an unusual situation. Take time to perceive and express what you feel. If you feel the need to talk to someone about your emotions, then contact your friends or family. In case you don't have an adequate advisor in your immediate environment, get professional help. At the end of this newsletter you will find information where to get professional help.

### Focus on the positive

- ▶ Focus on positive contents. This will help you to calm down and stabilize. Talk to your friends or family and pay attention to maintain positive contents of your conversation.



### Get distracted

- ▶ Think and talk about topics other than corona, for example by organizing, planning and taking care of important things in personal and work life.

### Practice simple relaxation exercises

- ▶ Anxiety and relaxation never occur at the same time. Therefore, practice relaxation exercises in order to reduce fears. You will find numerous instructions for relaxation exercises on the Internet



## How to manage the situation as a family

Our everyday life is in a muddle. The children are confused, they are out of school and yet they are not on holiday. Suddenly everyone is spending a lot of time at home. Often it is a nice time, but can also be revealed as stress test for partnership and family life. Therefore one must try to overcome the situation as stress-free as possible. Don't focus on the correct upbringing of your children or the conflict resolution with your partner during this period of time.

### Adhere to the usual daily structure

- ▶ Reflect together with your family how the day is divided into sections: learning time, playing time etc. write a schedule.

### Limit yourself and your children's „screen times“ for television, mobile phone or computer.

- ▶ Due to the excessive consumption of (social) media, a distorted picture of the current situation can develop which could scare your child. Therefore, you need to explain the current situation to your child in an age appropriate manner.

### Try different joint activities

- ▶ Play, read, tinker ... with your child.
- ▶ Start projects that you have put off in the past. Dedicate yourself to a piece of work which you don't have time for in everyday life.
- ▶ Encourage your child to do physical exercise within the current possibilities. ▶

### Enable retreat opportunities

- ▶ To reduce or rather to prevent conflicts everyone needs time for themselves. Define clearly delimited hours in which everyone can deal with themselves.

### Enable (non-contact) connections with friends and classmates

- ▶ Telephone, chatting and video conferencing can help your child to maintain social contacts despite social distancing.

### Respond to your child's feelings

- ▶ Accept if your child is more affectionate than usual and meet this need. In this situation your child needs security and reassurance.
- ▶ Stay calm and allow distraction, humor and relaxation.
- ▶ Refrain from establishing major educational measures in this situation and try to avoid punishments.

### Discuss the current situation regularly in a family circle

- ▶ For example establish a family crisis- team: How is everyone doing? Who needs what? What ideas and wishes do the individuals have?



## Measures to prevent violence

Spatial confinement, lack of retreat, lack of intimacy etc. can lead to aggression and violence. You need to counteract against any escalation of a situation actively and consciously.

### Recognize violence

- ▶ Violence does not only become evident in physical abuse, but also in shouting, devaluing, etc.
- ▶ You need to recognize your own aggression as well.

### Talk to someone about what's going on

- ▶ If you notice that you feel aggressive, keep distance.

### Get help

- ▶ If you are a victim of violence, seek help by telephone (see below) or call the police.

## How will the situation continue?

**Remember that this situation will pass.**

- ▶ It is important to know that the COVID 19 outbreak will inevitably pass
- ▶ Actively help to reduce your risk of illness and that of your surrounding people. Keep distance, wash your hands regularly also at home, cough and sneeze in the crook of your arm and follow the official measures of the federal government.
- ▶ Trust reliable information sources such as the Robert Koch Institute [www.rki.de](http://www.rki.de).
- ▶ Enjoy the little things in life, like a walk in the sun in upcoming spring or the carefree laughter of children.
- ▶ This situation gives us the opportunity to recognize what truly is important in life.

Source: Professional Association of Austrian Psychologists, [www.boep.or.at](http://www.boep.or.at)

**Various emergency hotlines provide support in personal discussions such as:**

- 📞 TelefonSeelsorge 0800 1110 - 111, - 222 or for kids 0800 1110 - 333.

*„There is an 'after' and it is up to us that all will be well ...“*



Yours  
Ihr **Michael Suchodoll**  
With our team of  
psychologists



M.Sc.  
**Karina Klein**  
Psychologist



M.Sc.  
**Maria Rühl**  
Psychologist



Dipl. Psych.  
**Regine Vieweg**  
Labor, operational,  
organizational  
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