

# Social Connectivity Self-Management Plan

- Develop or maintain a support network
- Stay physically active
- Talk or virtually connect with someone regularly, whether it be family, friend, or neighbor

## Green Flags – All Clear

## What this means



- If
- Connecting with others
  - Have formal/informal supports

You have social connections. Great!

## Yellow Flags – Caution

## What this means



- If:
- Disconnected from family, friends, or neighbors
  - Overeating OR Skipping meals
  - Changes in sleep
  - Difficulty concentrating/focusing
  - Irritable or angry
  - Sad or worry
  - Frustrated

If you notice a Yellow Flag, look over the list of “What Can You Do? Take a self-care step. If feelings do not improve, talk with a member of your health care team.

You have signs of social isolation:

Call your health care provider, consulting nurse, or mental health care provider if symptoms do not improve.

Name:

Number:

Instructions:

## Red Flags – Stop and Think

## What this means

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- If:
- Feeling Hopeless and helpless
  - Thoughts of self-harm

If you notice a Red Flag,  
Get Help!!

You need to talk to a health care or mental health care professional immediately. Follow these instructions:

**CALL 9-1-1**

If possible, notify your health care provider’s office:

Physician:

Number:

## Social Connectivity Facts

Social connectivity impacts your mental health and physical health according to research studies. People who feel connected report lower levels of anxiety and depression, higher self-esteem, and greater empathy for others. Social connectivity also builds trust and cooperation.

During emergencies, disasters, and pandemics, the need for social connectivity is still important, as physical distancing, or physical distance keeps us apart from loved ones, family, friends, and regular activities, e.g. activity at senior center or attending a Parks and Recreation class is not possible.

### What can you do?

**Acknowledge** that being physically distant is stressful.

**Stay connected.** Consider FaceTime, phone calls, text messaging, Zoom, Skype, WebEx, or virtual telecommunications application that provides video chat and/or voice calls using a computer, tablet, or mobile device. Some senior centers have virtual exercise and activity programs. When reaching out to others, consider writing a letter, sharing a recipe, or a favorite memory.

**Do benefit finding.** “Looking for the good is an important strategy,” says Dr. Julie Kolzet, Ph.D., and a licensed psychologist in NYC (who also sees patients remotely). If you are an older adult working from home, this may be an opportunity for autonomy and your travel time to/from work is decreased.

**Breathing exercises.** One type is mindful breathing. This is where you match your in breath with your out breath and focus on scanning your body to relax and calm. Though doing mindful breathing for 15 minutes is recommended, consider starting with 3-5 minutes.

**Be kind.** Research shows, when you do something nice for someone else, your brain’s pleasure and reward centers light up. It is called the “helper’s high.”

**Share something good.** Consider something small, like a funny emoji, cute picture, or positive quote. This can improve your mood and perhaps will help improve someone’s mood, too.

**Change your expectations.** We add to our stress levels by creating unrealistic goals. Be gentle on yourself. Consider breaking daily tasks into small doable steps to make it easier to achieve. Share your successes with others.

**Manage news intake and stay flexible.** Stay informed, though stick to reliable news outlets as rumors spread quickly and feed into panic. Information changes over time, so uncertainty may be normal.

**Consider the Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives (PEARLS).** This program can be offered over the telephone. It is evidence-based and has proven to show improvements for people socially isolated.

**Self-care**—Consider taking time to focus on your health and wellness. Practice good hygiene, get regular exercise, stay hydrated, and eat a healthy diet. Prayer and/or meditation can improve peace of mind.

**National Institute of Health website**—<https://www.nih.gov/sites/default/files/health-info/wellness-toolkits/social-wellness-checklist.pdf>

## Aging and Disability Services

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for King County— plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County.

For more information, call 1-844-348-5464 or e-mail [info@communitylivingconnections.org](mailto:info@communitylivingconnections.org)



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