Social Connectivity Self-Management Plan

Develop or maintain a support network.

If you:

Connect with others

Have formal and/or informal

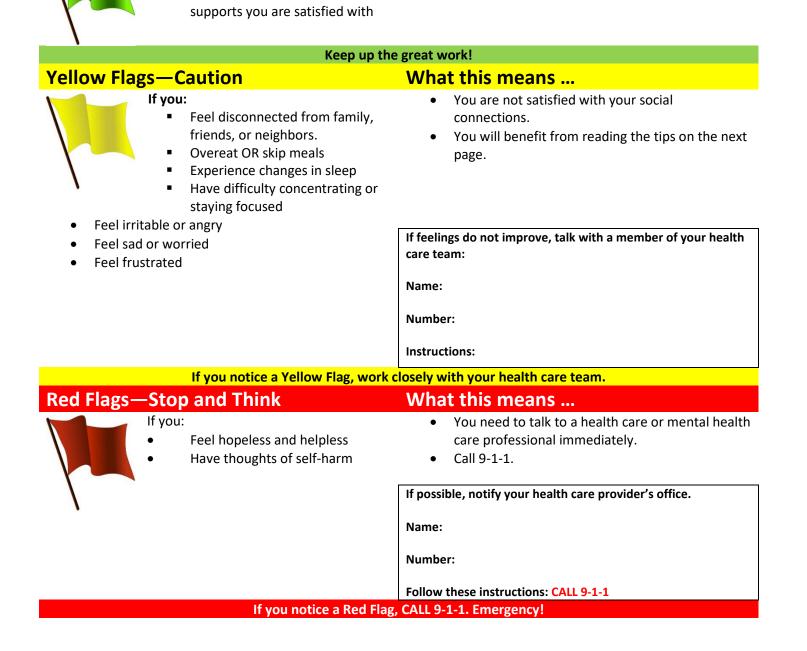
□ Stay physically active.

Green Flags—All Clear

□ Talk or virtually connect with someone regularly (family, friend, or neighbor).

What this means ...

• You have social connections.



Social Connectivity Fast Facts

- According to research studies, social connectivity impacts your mental and physical health.
- 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.

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 deice. Some senior centers have virtual exercise and activity programs. When reaching out to others, consider writing a letter, sharing a receipt, or sharing a favorite memory.
- **Do benefit finding**. "Looking for the good is an important strategy," says Julie Kolzet, PhD., a licensed psychologist in New York City (who also sees patients remotely). One example: If you are an older adult working from home, this may be an opportunity for autonomy and your commute time is decreased.
- **Practice mindful breathing**. 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 each day is recommended, consider starting with 3–5 minutes.
- **Be kind**. Research shows that when you do something nice for someone else, your brain's pleasure and reward centers light up. This is called the "helper's high."

- During emergencies, disasters, and pandemics, the need for social connectivity is still important, as physical distance and social distancing keeps us apart from loved ones, family, friends, and regular activities (e.g., senior center activities or community center classes).
- Share something good. Consider sharing something small, like a funny emoji, cute picture, or positive quote. This can improve your mood and perhaps will help improve some else'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 that are easier to achieve. Share your successes with others.
- Manage news intake and stay flexible. Stay informed but 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.
- **Practice 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.
- Use online resources such as the Social Wellness Checklist (National Institutes of Health) at https://bit.ly/3yXk2Cl.

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 information about services or interpretation assistance, call 844-348-5464 or e-mail info@communitylivingconnections.org.



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