

# **COPING WITH LONELINESS IN THE TIME OF CORONA!**

*You cannot be lonely if you like the person you're alone with... Wayne Dyer*

## **WHAT TO KNOW!**

- ❖ Isolating at home or social distancing during this pandemic has led many people to feel lonely even though “we are all in this together”
- ❖ It is not just being physically alone; loneliness is a state of mind where people feel isolated, unwanted, empty, unimportant, anxious, and depressed
- ❖ In general, living alone has increased over the years; single person households are the second most common type of household
- ❖ Before the pandemic, loneliness had reached epidemic proportions; an AARP survey found that more than 42 million Americans over the age of 45 had chronic loneliness
- ❖ Since the pandemic, loneliness seems to have increased due to the lack of person-to-person physical contact and staying safe at home, especially for those in high risk groups
- ❖ Social isolation can lead to chronic inflammation, heart disease, stroke, cancer, cognitive decline, high blood pressure, premature aging, and a higher risk for death
- ❖ Loneliness has also been shown to lead to alcoholism, depression, poor sleep, anxiety, and even schizophrenia
- ❖ In social isolation, many people gain weight because of eating more comfort food, getting little exercise, and being couchbound while binge-watching television/movies
- ❖ Studies have also shown that loneliness is associated with increased suicidal risk as well as decreased cognitive functioning over time including dementia
- ❖ Managing your loneliness is as important as managing your physical health

## **WHAT TO DO!**

- ❖ Monitor your mental health for increased signs of depression, anxiety, anger, compulsive behaviors, and hopelessness
- ❖ Join an online support group
- ❖ Go for a walk or drive to a park where you can socially distance and be around people
- ❖ Check in with family, friends, and neighbors to see how they are coping
- ❖ Schedule a virtual group meeting such as a book club, cooking class, card game, etc.
- ❖ Offer to shop for others or neighbors when you shop or run errands
- ❖ Attend virtual meet-up groups
- ❖ Join an online tour of museums, zoos, and historic sites
- ❖ Establish daily routines including completing a task, eating well, or connecting with others
- ❖ Exercise and maintain physical activities such as yoga, biking, or running
- ❖ Monitor your alcohol and drug consumption
- ❖ Seek professional help if you are unable to overcome loneliness, anxiety, or depression

## **WE PRACTICE TELEHEALTH AND CAN HELP!**

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at [\*\*DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com\*\*](mailto:DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com)

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