



Singles Coping During COVID-19

■ by Debra A. Crockett, MSW, LSW

The coronavirus pandemic has upended all of our lives as we have had to make major adjustments to routines and activities that we previously took for granted. Quarantine was one major adjustment for everyone but may leave singles feeling especially vulnerable and isolated. Singles who felt lonely and isolated before the pandemic may experience increased anxiety and/or depression. Our response to quarantine and COVID-19 restrictions will depend on several factors including personality type, the category of singles—never married, divorced, widowed, single parent—chronological age, as well as life cycle.

In a May 21, 2020 podcast titled “How Singles Are Affected by COVID-19” featured in the “Psychiatric Times”, Allie Shapiro, MD, stated, “...Relationship status is not what makes a person lonely during COVID. People feeling lonely may be natural extroverts who have not learned to enjoy their own company.” Dr. Shapiro suggested virtual gatherings or getting a pet as ways to combat feelings of loneliness.

Never Married Singles

The never married singles may experience frustration as their means of social outlets and connections are extremely limited. I would encourage this category to consider this time to engage in self-improvement by various means, such as online courses either for pleasure or toward a degree, certification, or developing a new skill. Trust me, I get it, there may be online burnout, so online courses may be a turn off. But this is also a great time to use the telephone to reconnect with people you may have lost contact with or, more importantly, to connect with those who are very vulnerable, like seniors. I know someone who baked cookies to drop off to seniors in her local congregation.

Single Parents

Single parents have had unique challenges during the pandemic because, in addition to all the other responsibilities that they shoulder, they were forced into the role of teacher, which many felt unprepared for. One effective way to address the frustrations

- Continued on Page 2 -

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- Continued from Page 1 -



both you and your child may be experiencing during remote learning is to pause and acknowledge it. It is perfectly okay to say, "I see it's getting frustrating right now; let's take a break and come back to this." Be sure to keep the lines of communication open between you and your child, as well as with you and their teacher.

Mature Adults and Seniors

Another group of singles especially affected by COVID-19 are the mature adults and seniors who are among the most vulnerable to the disease and hence often isolated from family and friends. It is important that mature adults and seniors find outlets that will connect them with other people. We must be creative and think "outside of the box".

I am a senior single, and I recently attended my first virtual birthday party. I connect with my women's Bible study twice monthly. I maintain a weekly prayer group with two other friends, and we check in with each other during the week. I try to walk and maintain some type of exercise routine when possible. Most importantly, I maintain my spiritual connections. I feel especially close to God when I journal, especially during my devotions. These are historic times; we need to be able to tell our children and grandchildren what it was like and what we were thinking during this time. Psalm 68:6 says that "God sets the lonely in families". Whether we are physically or emotionally close to biological families, we are a part of the family of God. We have a Savior who has promised to never leave us or forsake us. We can find comfort in knowing that we are not alone. ■

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