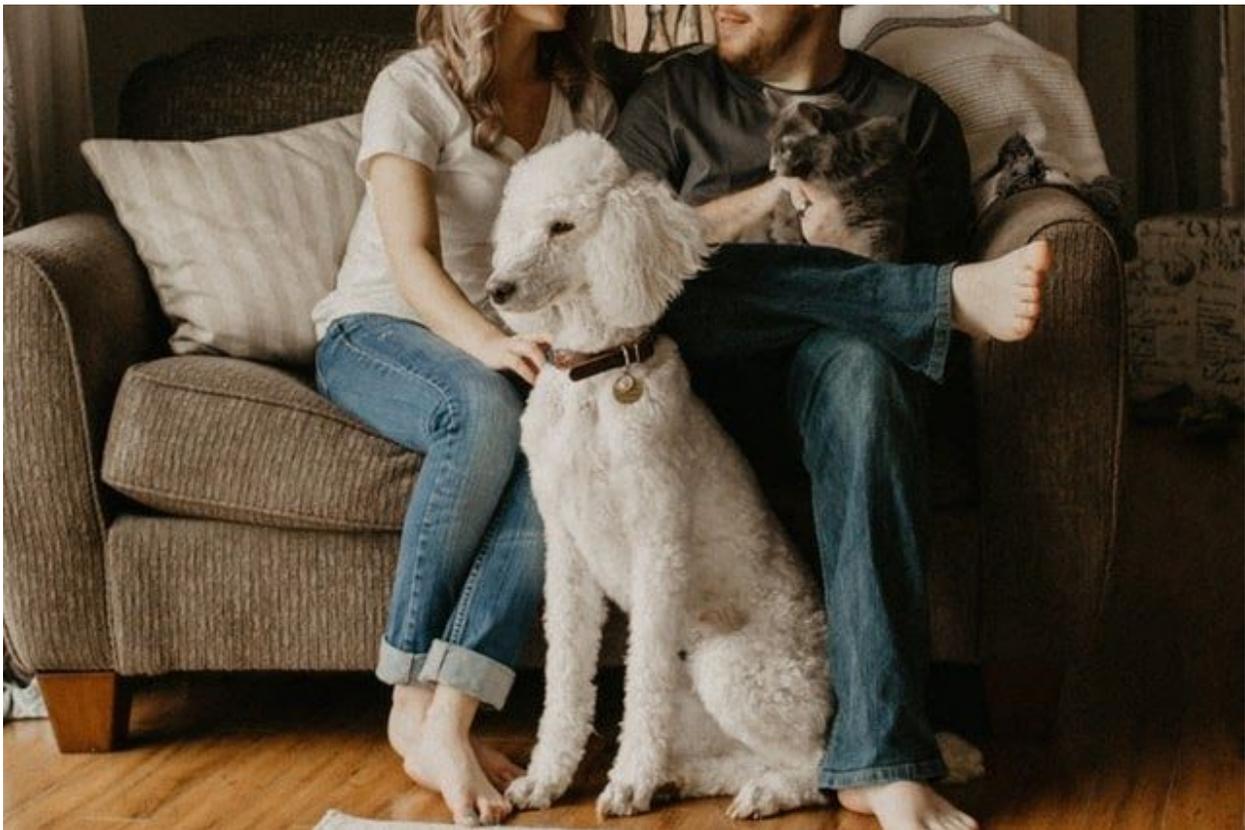


Resources from Family Renewal Counseling

In Sickness and in Health ... and in Quarantine?

Tips to Stay Close And Overcome Conflict While Social Distancing with Your Mate



You Can Get Through This

When you and your mate exchanged marital vows, you may have lovingly voiced the traditional words of commitment covering for “better or worse” and a whole lot of other things. But did anyone say anything about weeks on end of quarantine? The stress of too much togetherness in a time of uncertainty can be tough for even the strongest relationships. That’s why we wanted you to have these resources to help you cope and even thrive during this challenging time.

Deeper Still: Conversations on Faith during COVID-19



For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Psalm 27:5 (New International Version)

When crises arise, it is common to reexamine what we believe. This is both natural to do and useful in gaining a sense of purpose and perspective. On the next page, you will find some questions to ponder while you are sheltering at home. You can take them one at a time, a few at a time, or go over them all at once.

The first set helps you look deeper into your view of God; the second is more general in how to apply that view toward this current situation.

Set 1

1. How do I see God?
2. Who does He say He is? (Ex. Genesis 1:1, Deuteronomy 4:31, Exodus 34:6-7, Psalm 86:5, Isaiah 40:28-29, Revelation: 1-8, Isaiah 55: 8-9, John 17:3)
3. How does COVID 19 impact how I see or understand Him?
4. Am I viewing God through the lens of circumstances or am I viewing circumstances through the lens of Who God says He is?
5. What does God say about our current circumstances? (Ex. Psalm 46:1, John 16:33)
6. Does my answer to 5 change my perception? If so, how?
7. What does God say about trust in Him? (Ex. Psalm 20:7, 2 Timothy 1:7, Matthew 10: 29-31, Isaiah 41:10)
8. Is God forbidding fear or is He saying when you are afraid, He is able and trustworthy? (hint: fear is a natural response given to alert us to danger)
9. What is it like to know you have someone you can trust when the world seems so unsteady?

Set 2

10. What does God say He will do during hard times? (Ex. Romans 8:28)
11. How have I seen God at work around me?
12. How have I seen God at work in me?
13. What does God ask of me? (Ex. Micah 6:8, Matthew 22: 37-39, Romans 10:13)
14. How can I serve God and my neighbor specifically during this time?
15. How can I pray for others at this time?

For further spiritual help, you may want to search for churches or houses of worship in your area. Though congregations may not be gathering in person, many are holding online services and prayer time. Here are links to some of our local resources who are addressing COVID-19 or spiritual struggles specifically. All of these are Christian churches or organizations:

Cherokee Presbyterian Church: Weekly devotional from the book of Habakkuk as it relates to COVID 19 <https://www.facebook.com/CherokeePresbyterianChurch/>

First Baptist Church of Woodstock: Unprecedented Times devotionals
<https://fbcw.org/on-demand/?sapurl=Lys5ODU2L2xiL21zLytqY25zd2dtP2JyYW5kaW5nPXRYdWUmZW1iZWQ9dHJ1ZQ==>

Northpoint Church: Messages (audio) addressing those who struggle with doubts about God <https://store.northpoint.org/products/who-needs-god-audio-download>

Thriving Beyond Surviving: Calming Your Conflict



“So encourage each other and build each other up just as you are already doing.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)

In the midst of the current COVID-19 health scare, couples are finding that their anxiety levels have increased. Although this is a normal reaction in uncertain times, it can cause stress on the marital relationship, especially if the couple or entire family is isolated or under quarantine. Couples may find themselves on edge with each other. Tempers may flare a little more easily. How do we combat the intruder of stress into our homes?

1. Take a breath or time out. In the heat of the moment, it’s good to take a time out. You might say to your partner, “Hey, I want to work this out but right now I need to cool off a little, I’ll come back and talk when I’m able.”

2. Realize your spouse is stressed too. Remember that your partner is likely responding to the same tensions that are also weighing on you. Seeing things through his/her eyes may create a space of grace.

3. Talk about how you are feeling. Are the pressures taking their toll? Do you need to feel your partner's presence or reassurance? Or conversely, are you feeling overwhelmed and need some quiet time. Ask for it! And give it in return!

4. Respond to your partner with patience. Does your spouse need some space? Let them have it. Are you tempted to think the worst when things feel edgy? Refer to number 2.

5. Apologize. It is possible one or both of you may say something sharp at some point. Admitting you blew it, asking for, and receiving forgiveness will keep your relationship free of resentment.

6. Look your partner in the eyes. Looking into the eyes of the person you love can diffuse tempers, especially if you see a reflection of their feelings there.

7. Create time together. Turn off the electronics, put the kids to bed, and spend some time connecting. Read a book together, take a bubble bath for two, or sit on the porch holding hands. Turn isolation into intimacy!

Turning Isolation into Intimacy: Conversations for Couples



“Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away.” Song of Songs 8:7a (NIV)

As we wait for the all clear to get back outside, we can think of nothing better than turning up the intimacy while we are inside. Maybe it’s time to get out of our relational rut to reminisce and dream again with your spouse. We’ve adapted some questions from Kathleen Mates-Youngman’s “Couples Therapy Workbook” and added a few prompts of our own to get you started.

We recommend you make the time intentional so you can focus on each other without distractions. You might want to select just a few conversation starters for an in-home date night or you may want to break them down over several nights. Your spouse may not remember everything you do or he/she may remember the

details in a different way and that's OK. This is meant to be enjoyable and not a test. Have fun with it!

Ready to start? Put the kids to bed, turn off the electronics, and set the mood to enjoy each other.

1. Do you remember the first time we met?
2. The first thing I noticed about you was.....
3. I knew I had fallen in love when.....
4. What was that moment like for you?
5. What was your favorite date or thing to do together then?
6. What I love about us as a couple now is...
7. When do you feel the closest now?
8. What is your favorite way for me to show you I love you?
9. What can we do to make our relationship feel new and exciting?
10. What dreams did we have then?
11. What dreams do we have now?
12. How can we make those dreams come true together?
13. When you are stressed, do you need space or closeness?
14. How can I give you what you need when you are stressed?
15. Do/would you like me to tell you I love you every day?

Source: Mates-Youngman, K. (2104). *Couples Therapy Workbook: 30 Guided Conversations To Re-Connect Relationships*. Eau Claire, WI: PESI Publishing and Media.

Cabin Fever Busters: 15 Ideas for Couples and Families



“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Romans 12:12 (NIV)

Walls beginning to close in? Can't binge watch one more thing? Here are some ideas to help you get moving, get connecting with others, or get something accomplished.

Work in Your Garden – It's finally getting warm outside here in the South! Grab a trowel or hoe and a pair of gloves and get those flower and vegetable beds ready. For spring plantings, you can order seeds online.

Take a Penny Drive (if permitted) – You may not be able to intermingle with others but you can enjoy a beautiful drive! If you are with your spouse or kids, have one person flip a penny to determine your next turn. Heads is right, tails is left. See where you end up!

Talk to Your Neighbor – Remember when people used to know their neighbors? Now is the time to get acquainted with yours. You can stand at a distance (at least 6 feet recommended) while learning a little about each other.

Reconnect with a Friend – Use those electronics to reconnect with someone you haven't heard from in a long time but would love to catch up with.

Tackle a Home Project – If your house is like ours, there is probably a project or two that could use some attention. Touch up some paint, unclog the bathroom drain, or stop that toilet from leaking. Need parts? Order online.

Learn a New Language – Wanting to brush up on your French? Duolingo is free and easy.

Find a New Recipe – Break out of your culinary routine and spice up mealtime with a new dish.

Declutter – Get your Marie Kondo on and clean those closets!

Organize Your Photos – Boxes of photos stuffed in the closet? Thousands of photos hogging space on your phone? Maybe it's time to organize. To create albums from your digitals, check out Shutterfly, Vistaprint, Nation Photo Lab, or Ritz Pics.

Go on a Scavenger Hunt – In your home or outside where spring is beginning to show her colors, this is always fun. Have one person come up with a list of items to find or have them create clues to take you from one place to another until you find a prize at the end of your search.

Practice Your Photography Skills – Always wanted to take professional quality photos? Check out some online tutorials.

Wash Your Car – Is that yellow pollen blanketing your car? Break out the hose and give your auto a quick bath.

Play Ball in Your Yard – Yep, we know you miss hauling the kids to all those practices! Why not play ball with them in the yard instead? No quarantine on fresh air.

Puzzles and Board Games – Not as flashy as gaming online, but isn't that the point? Build your relationships while having some strategic fun.

Coloring Books and Paint by Number – Channel the artist inside while relaxing at the same time. No supplies? Amazon delivers.

10 In-Home Date Ideas!



I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine. Song of Solomon 6:3 (NIV)

Game Night – Play your favorite board games or grab a deck of cards and learn a new game together!

Spa Night – All this talk of coronavirus can be stressful. Why not find some ways to relax together? Light some candles, play some calming music, enjoy a warm bubble bath, or give each other massages.

Outdoor Fun – We may be practicing social distancing, but we can still go outside! As the weather gets nicer, go for a walk together, go to a park, or toss around a frisbee.

Have a Backyard Picnic – Throw a blanket on the ground and enjoy a meal outside!

Karaoke or Dance the Night Away – Check out YouTube for songs with lyrics and even video dance lessons!

Take Personality Tests – You can do silly ones on Facebook or BuzzFeed, or more serious ones such as finding out your love language, or one based on the Myers-Briggs personality types. There's always more you can learn about your partner!

Virtual Tour of a Museum – A lot of the world's greatest museums, such as the National Museum of Art or the Guggenheim Museum, allow you to do a tour online. A quick Google search can open up a world of art, history, and science!

International Night – Even with travel restrictions in place, you can still find ways to experience other cultures. Pick a country you both want to visit, make food from that country, watch a movie produced there, practice a cultural dance along with YouTube, or learn a few words in a new language together.

Go Through Old Photos and Make an Album – Take a moment to pull your favorite photos from both of your phones and create a digital album or choose photos you want to print for a physical photo album.

Make a Video Telling Your Love Story – Not only will you get to enjoy reminiscing about how you met, your first date, or your wedding day, but you will have something to look back on in the future when some of the details get a little fuzzy.

Stages of Grief During COVID-19



Grief. We are all going through it. Although its stages are fairly predictable, we can find ourselves in any one of them at any given time. Each stage is valid with its own sets of thoughts and responses. What's important to know is that our feelings are normal considering what we are going through. Our world has experienced a great deal of loss as have each of us individually.

As the pandemic's impacts evolve, we may go through the same responses multiple times. However, if you find yourself stuck in anxiety, anger, or sadness and can't find relief, please reach out for help. If you are in the state of Georgia and are in crisis, dial 800.715.4225. If you need extra help navigating during this time of sheltering, feel free to call 678.631.7639 for online therapy or consult *Psychology Today* for other options.

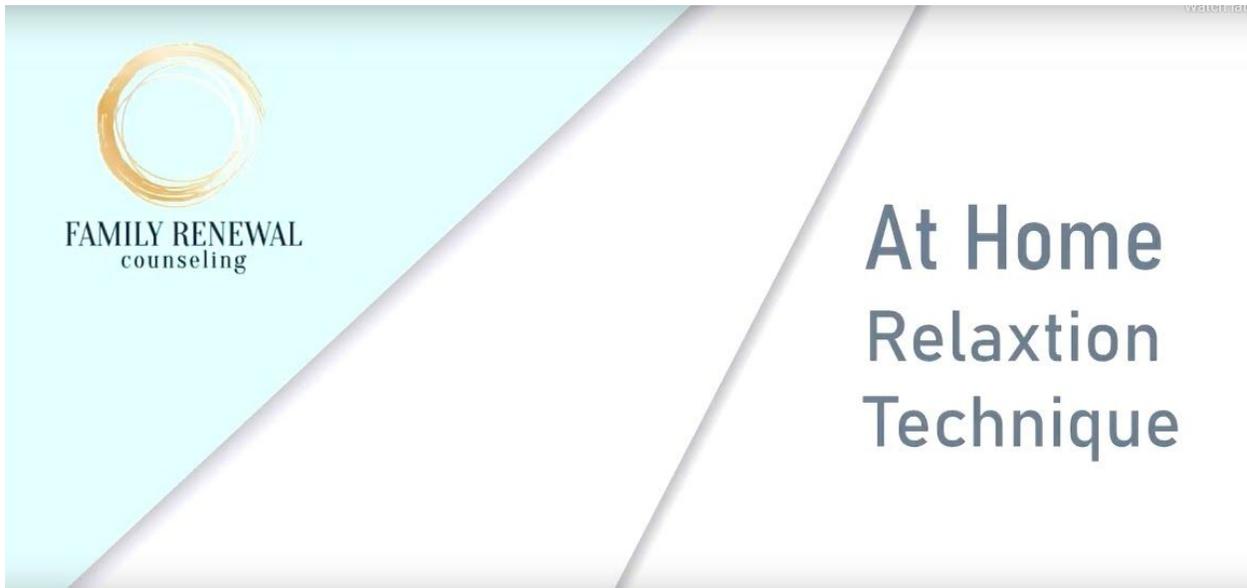
Outside the state of Georgia, you can find someone by going to *Psychology Today's* website and typing in your zip code. Scroll through the many options until you find someone whom you feel would be a good fit for you. You are not alone.

Stage	What Stage Looks Like
Shock/Denial	"Maybe it won't be so bad." "We can stop it before it gets so bad." "It probably won't affect us here as much."
Anger	"The government is getting it wrong!" "The news is getting it wrong!" "Who says I can't leave my house!" "This is _____'s fault!" "If everyone else would follow the rules.....!"
Bargaining	"Maybe if I keep my hands washed I can still go see friends." "Maybe if we obey the rules this will be over in a couple of weeks."
Sadness	"This has changed my world and it hurts." "This is lasting a long time and I don't know what to do with that." "What I knew to be true doesn't seem true anymore."
Acceptance	"Wow. This is really happening and I need to figure it out." "What do we really need and how can I carry on in light of that?" "How can we adapt while this is going on?"
Meaning Making	"What does this mean personally, spiritually?" "How has this changed my life for the good?" "How has this changed culture for the good?" "What do we know now that we didn't before?" "How can life be better after experiencing this?" "How can I help others during/after this?"

Sources: Berinato, S. (2020). That Discomfort You Are Feeling is Grief. *Harvard Business Review*.
https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief?fbclid=IwAR3_z-8yX9EJ5czlFIHhOYNXkhfoE9fHHKcTejk5_tU7DBZE0uXSKmlTnhg

Kubler-Ross, E. & Kessler, D. (2005). *On grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss*. New York, NY: Scribner

In-Home Relaxation Technique Video



Follow along with Christie Poole, LMFT, in this video as she leads you through relaxation techniques that you can do anywhere. The process is easy to learn and will give you tools to help manage anxiety and stress while practicing social distancing. Click here to watch:

[In-Home Relaxation Technique](#)

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