



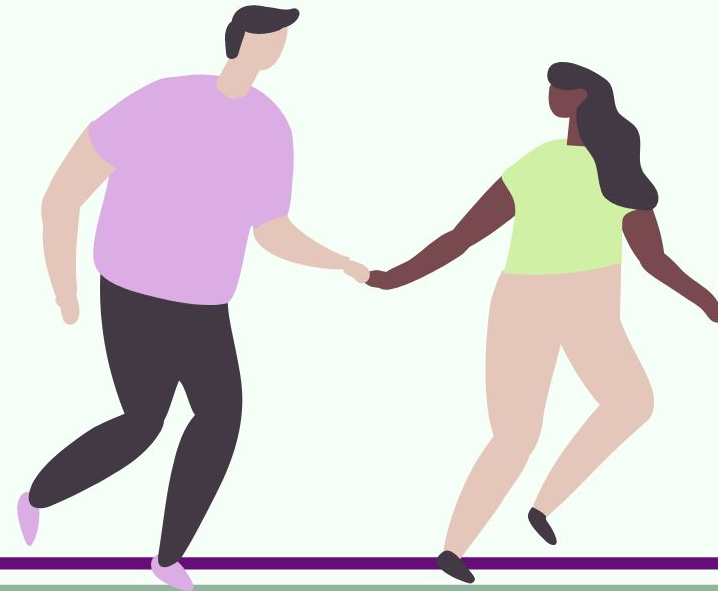
Navigating Relationships During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Choosing Therapy

MIHA
Mental Health America
B4Stage4

Navigating Relationships During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

Common Issues, Coping Strategies & How Online Therapy Can Help



As we continue to face extreme stress wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, **relationships have the potential to be a tremendous source of support.**

However, COVID-19 has challenged relationships, and sometimes thrown this support system into upheaval. It's important to understand just how this ongoing health crisis is impacting relationships and what we can do to counteract the negative effects.



OBJECTIVES

- Identify common issues and stressors many couples are dealing with throughout the pandemic
- Discuss coping strategies to effectively manage various issues
- Learn how online couples counseling can serve as a tool during this particularly challenging time to help partners work through the issues they're facing





How COVID-19 Exacerbates Relationship Issues



- **Stress Spillover**

The continued pandemic is a chronic and intense stressor that is interfering in the way people perceive and interact in their relationships.

- **Simultaneous Stress**

Often in relationships, one partner is in a position to nurture and support the person who is experiencing more strife. But during the pandemic, both partners are likely experiencing significant stress simultaneously.

- **Social Isolation**

People no longer have outside, separate interactions, which can create an unwelcomed sense of monotony.



How Covid-19 Exacerbates Relationship Issues

- **Financial Strain**

Money issues, already a common source of discord for couples, have increased significantly because of the coronavirus situation.

- **Health Anxiety**

Worries about their own health and the health of loved ones are keeping couples on edge.

- **Distribution of Household Responsibilities and Childcare**

Zoom meetings and work projects coincide with household responsibilities and, in the case of parenthood, caring for children and helping kids juggle their responsibilities in this new way of living, working, and attending school.



- **Communication**

Deep, intimate conversations are often replaced with short, often tense, conversations about practical matters of living through a pandemic.

- **Trust Issues Around the Pandemic**

Not everyone is in agreement about the nature of COVID and the forced regulations, which could become a source of tension and disagreement among some couples.



Boundaries

- Because outside support systems are less accessible due to pandemic restrictions, couples must rely on each other as their primary and prolonged source of support.
- Many couples face a sense of increased quantity of time spent together but decreased quality and a lack of personal space.
- The lack of boundaries between different facets of life makes it difficult to maintain normal routines and intentionally distinct “work time” and “couple time.”





10 Tips

for Maintaining a Healthy Relationship at Home During the Pandemic



10 Tips for Maintaining a Healthy Relationship at Home During the Pandemic

- **Discover ways to support each other**

Instead of taking your partner's words or actions personally and reacting to irritability or criticism in kind, take a deep breath so you can approach them with openness, flexibility, and empathy.

- **Learn to be responsive**

When both partners perceive each other as responsive and understanding, it's easier to navigate simultaneous stress in a positive, healthy manner.

- **Communicate mindfully**

Be fully present as you talk to each other or spend intentional time together rather than being distracted or trying to multitask.



10 Tips for Maintaining a Healthy Relationship at Home During the Pandemic

- **Develop a routine together**

To reduce stress and return a sense of calm order to your household, work with your partner to create structure and routine.

- **Establish boundaries**

Make space and time for each of you to have some alone time each day. Also, limit your workday.

- **Make fun a priority**

The key is variety to keep things fresh and fun and to break the sense of monotony that isolation has created.



10 Tips for Maintaining a Healthy Relationship at Home During the Pandemic

- **Get out and experience nature**

Spending time in nature, even as little as 15 minutes a day, has been shown to reduce stress as well as enhance positive connections.

- **Stay connected to others**

Now more than ever, it's important to have a varied support system.

- **Initiate intimacy**

Sexual health is an important component of overall relationship health, so nurture it intentionally to bring you closer together.

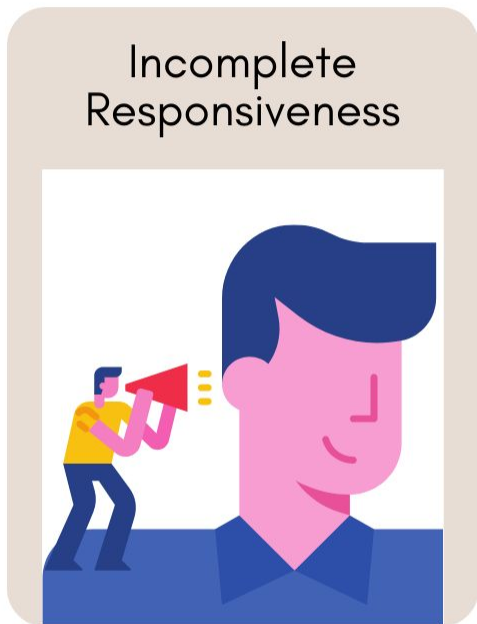
- **See a therapist that specializes in couples counseling**





Relationship Concerns While Living Apart During COVID-19





Perceived partner responsiveness is a crucial component to healthy relationships. When someone believes their partner listens fully and expresses empathy and understanding, they tend to feel more closely connected and can better cope with even extreme stressors like COVID-19.



Relationship Concerns While Living Apart During COVID-19

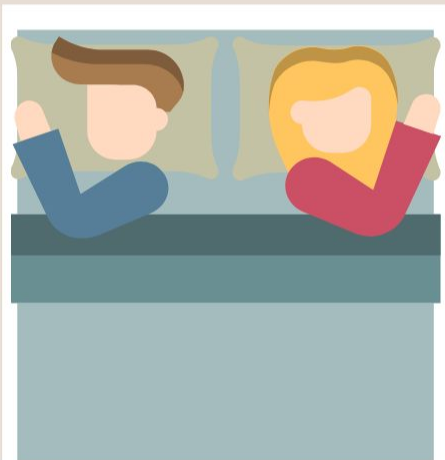


Sometimes, couples differ in their opinion of the severity of the pandemic and consequences of contracting the virus. If one partner is very anxious and desires to quarantine to protect their health but the other does not, feelings of resentment or even anger can develop.



Relationship Concerns While Living Apart During COVID-19

Lack of Physical Intimacy



Living apart during COVID-19 means a complete lack of physical contact, making it harder for couples to feel close on a romantic level. Often, a romantic relationship can come to feel like an ordinary friendship.





6 Tips to Maintain a Healthy Relationship While Apart During the Pandemic



- **Approach your situation (and each other) with acceptance**
It's okay and realistic to have negative thoughts and feelings about having to live apart. Resisting the situation and ruminating about how hard it is to be apart, though, won't help.
- **Build a strong foundation**
Use this time to get to know each other more fully. Use video chats and phone calls as opportunities to share your hopes, dreams, and goals. Discuss options for your future together.
- **Be purposeful about perceived responsiveness**
Agree to make mutual support a priority, and approach your conversations as opportunities to talk about superficial things you wouldn't just text to random friends.



- **Expand your focus**

There's a lot more to our daily lives and internal experiences than COVID-19. Make sure your conversations are about more than just COVID-19.

- **Foster a sense of adventure**

You might each be isolated in your own homes, but thanks to technology, you can still experience the world together.

- **Learn and grow together**

Use this time to discover shared interests and hobbies or to learn how to do something your partner loves to do.





Couples Counselors Know How to Deal With Your COVID- 19 Relationship Concerns

Online Couples Counseling Can Help



Couples Counselors Know How to Deal With Your COVID-19 Relationship Concerns

- Therapists specializing in relationship issues understand the unique difficulties couples face, in general and during COVID-19
- The goal of couples counseling is to identify the heart of issues and solve conflicts in safe and neutral ways
- Therapists can help couples living together or apart develop coping skills and tools to get through this tough time

***Online therapy is a rapidly growing platform, and sessions between a therapist and a couple have been found to be just as effective as in person therapy. Video therapy can be especially useful during the pandemic.**





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EXPERTISE
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EXPERIENCE
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Time - Eastern time

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

Night

🕒 08:00 AM
👤 2 Therapists available

🕒 09:00 AM
👤 3 Therapists available

🕒 10:00 AM
👤 5 Therapists available

🕒 11:00 AM
👤 5 Therapists available

Briana Ziemiec

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- Licensed Mental Health Counselor
- Video Therapy starting at \$150
- Specializing in Anxiety, Codependency, Depression, Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), Personality disorders
- Years of Experience: 3

"Too many people are unaware that it is not outer events or circumstances that will create happiness; rather it is our perception of events and of ourselves that will create, or uncreate, positive emotions."

Full Profile

Book Appointment

Dr. Lisa Cordero, M.S., M.S., LMHC, LPC, Psy.D

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- Licensed Professional Counselor
- Licensed Mental Health Counselor
- Doctorate in Psychology
- Video Therapy starting at \$150
- Specializing in Anxiety, Codependency, Family issues, Substance abuse, Trauma
- Years of Experience: 15

"Challenges are what make life interesting. Overcoming them is what makes life meaningful." - Joshua J Marine

Full Profile

Book Appointment

Aquilla Edwards, PhD

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- Licensing: Licensed Psychologist
- Licensed Psychologist
- Video Therapy starting at \$150
- Specializing in Anxiety, Depression, Adolescent mental health, Parenting issues
- Years of Experience: 6

"Pushing through discomfort is where the magic happens. Like working out or learning to play an instrument, growth happens when you move beyond the comfort zone."

Full Profile

Book Appointment



Final Thoughts on Relationships During COVID-19



Whatever difficulties and concerns you are facing, know that **you are not alone** in having them. Talking with a couples therapist can make a positive difference in your mental health and your health as a couple.

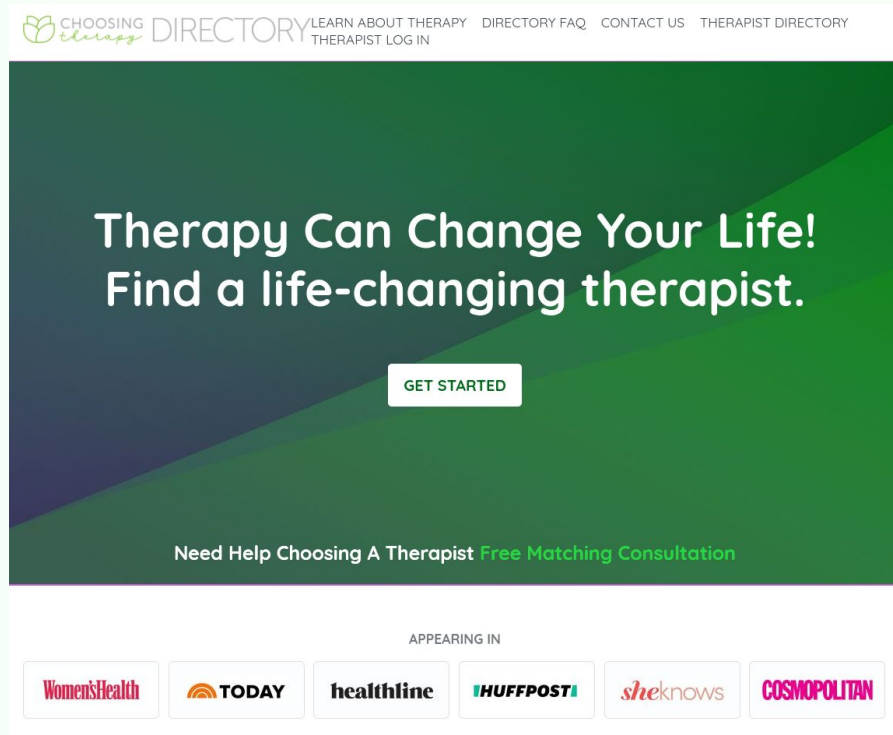
The pandemic doesn't have to mean the end of your relationship. With help and support, it can be the beginning of a relationship that's stronger than ever.



Visit **Directory.ChoosingTherapy.com** to search for the right couples counselor for your relationship.

Or, schedule a free, confidential phone call with a Choosing Therapy Navigator to receive personalized therapist recommendations.

Either way, your first therapy session can take place in as little as 12 hours.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Directory.ChoosingTherapy.com website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo and links for 'LEARN ABOUT THERAPY', 'THERAPIST LOG IN', 'DIRECTORY FAQ', 'CONTACT US', and 'THERAPIST DIRECTORY'. The main content area has a dark green background with the text 'Therapy Can Change Your Life! Find a life-changing therapist.' and a 'GET STARTED' button. Below this, there is a link for 'Need Help Choosing A Therapist Free Matching Consultation'. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'APPEARING IN' with logos for Women's Health, TODAY, healthline, HUFFPOST, sheknows, and COSMOPOLITAN.

