

## [Enjoying Life While Coping with the New Reality](#)

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*Christa Daku, Executive Director with Envision Counselling & Support Centre (in-studio photo).*

After more than a month spent in isolation at each of our respective homes, many are experiencing a sense of anxiety over what to do to fill the time, not just to cure boredom, but to also ensure good mental health. Some are simple over being cooped up, even if it's with their favourite people in the world.

Whether you're alone and trying to avoid depression, or you're part of a large household of people who would normally be busy out in the world doing a variety of activities, the slower pace of the world and the lack of options outside of the home offer an opportunity for taking advantage of the extra time.

Christa Daku, Executive Director with Envision Counselling and Support, advises perceiving the slowing down as a benefit to creating special memories this year.

"I think people are getting really creative with outside yard games in the back yard, or having the barbeques, or the bonfires, things that you can do as a family to make memories," she commented. "Because we want to, ultimately, impress upon our kids that we can make happy memories, and it teaches them how to be resilient and change their picture."

*"They might not be going to school and having play dates, and all of the things that are a loss right now for so many of us in society, but there's an opportunity for us, as a whole, to teach resiliency and coping skills, and how you move from a drastic situation to possibly a more positive one. And we really, really need to be creative and reach outside the box."*

"You know, it's not our normal day-to-day life, but it's really important to look at other options, because we don't live in an all-or-nothing society," Daku noted. "Just because we can't go to school or we can't go play with friends, it doesn't mean we can't replace it with something else."

Thanks to technology, in fact, most people who are staying at home still have the ability to reach out to friends, family, or to one of the local support organizations, such as Envision's Walk-In (now Call-In) Counselling Service. Read more [HERE](#).

"There are lots of agencies throughout the province that, if they have clients on their case load that don't have that ability, they're looking at ways to make that work," Daku explained. "So it's important to remember that there are agencies and people out there to support you, even though it's from a distance, and definitely reach out."

She said reaching out to gain coping skills can help one avoid getting stuck in their own head.

"Sometimes we just swirl, you know? We get stuck in our head and go around and around in circles, and the more we ruminate about it, the worse it gets, so it's important to just reach out for that support," she reminded. "It's not a negative thing to be feeling down right now, it's part of the grieving process and everybody is going through it in one way or another, but we have to have those skills to get through it."

As for the day-to-day, Daku emphasized the importance of self-care, as well as alone time.

"It's important to try and adjust our routines, I think, to be able to allow for that self-care time," she said. "Whatever that looks like. If it's a half an hour every evening that you commit to taking a break and just having some alone time."

*"I think that's important for our kids as well. They need that time, either in their room, or out in the yard, or whatever, especially in sibling groups, they need that time to themselves."*

Daku said for those who feel the need to keep up with pre-COVID times around the house, or even who are juggling the pressures of working from home with facilitating learning for their children and taking care of the household, remember the slower pace of society does lend itself to being able to ease the pressure a little bit.

"Just appreciate that you're going through every day doing the best you can. Just be gentle on ourselves," she shared. "We're all in the same boat, in one way or another. We're just coping differently, and we have different responsibilities, but it's not about how much productivity [there is] in every day. And I think it's important to take a step back, and be accepting of ourselves for what we do accomplish that day, because there's always tomorrow."

She added it's important to recognize self-care is worth leaving the dishes until tomorrow, and that creativity, even without artistic skill, can be of benefit to everyone, since using the right brain can help increase resiliency.