

Couples, conflict and COVID-19

Source: [Manulife](#)

Physical distancing and self-isolation quickly became two terms that defined 2020. With all this new time spent indoors, we must also be aware of how this will impact our mental health and those around us. Heightened stress and prolonged time with your partner or spouse can prove challenging. And where challenges arise, so too may conflicts.

Here are some tips to help positively manage your relationship

Create a “we need to talk” plan

Figure out how and when to discuss the stresses you’re both feeling.

When your discussion begins, it’s important to do the following:

- Listen and validate each other's feelings - you can show support by listening
- Don’t jump to problem solving mode unless your partner asks for that kind of help
- Focus on developing creative ways to survive the remainder of the crisis
- Pro tip: limit how much time you spend discussing relationship problems.

Make plenty of “just me time”

Create a plan with firm boundaries for spending time together and apart. List your expectations and remember – compromise is key! Try to use “I feel,” and “I need,” statements, rather than criticizing each other (this will help each of you from becoming defensive).

Recognize personal signs of irritability and have a safe space to take time apart in. If you find yourself needing space, communicate that clearly with respect to your partner.

Find new ways to connect

You can also create new positive ways to connect. Figure out what you both enjoy doing – going for walks (at a safe distance from others), playing board games, or learning a new language. Maybe it’s time to watch a new movie or series or take a virtual cooking class and enjoy the fruits of your labour together!

Important information for abusive domestic situations:

Quarantine and self-isolation can add extra challenges for those in an abusive relationship. If you are in danger, call 911.