

Supporting Ourselves in Our Relationships and Adaptation Processes During the Pandemic

During the coronavirus epidemic, we have been introduced to many new concepts and ways of life that we were not used to before. Many concepts that may be new to most of us, such as social isolation and online communication/interaction in social relationships, have started entering our lives. All of us need to support ourselves and our relationships spiritually, both in adapting to new ways of socializing and in adapting to the innovations brought by the epidemic process or after the epidemic. If you are curious about understanding new concepts in your social life and supporting yourself and your relationships, you can read the rest of the article.

What is Social Isolation?

- It is the state of being partially or completely away from people we know and society to prevent the spread of the epidemic.
- It is an objective concept, and it is related to the number of people I meet.
- Social isolation can sometimes be confused with the concept of loneliness.
- Loneliness means being completely away from relationships with other people.
- Loneliness is a subjective concept, making it difficult to explain objectively due to its deeply personal nature.
- A person may feel lonely in a crowded environment.
- Therefore, social isolation does not mean loneliness.

Communicating Online During Social Isolation Process

- "It should not be forgotten that no relationship is genuine unless there is physical intimacy."
- However, under current conditions, having online meetings with the technological opportunities we have at our disposal keeps relationships alive and nourishes us spiritually.
- With online communication, we can continue to communicate with our loved ones even though we are physically in different environments.
- Staying by yourself is as necessary as being social.
- We do not have to force ourselves to be social; it is enough to communicate as much as we need.
- If we organize our online communications according to the alone time we may need individually, interacting with our loved ones, even on a virtual plane, will make us feel good.
- Social ties are valuable to us, even if they are provided through online communication. Thus, we can increase our tolerance for the stress brought by the epidemic. Communicating Online During Social Isolation Process.

Adaptation to Social Isolation

- Since this process is a period in which we turn inward to a certain extent, our personal and relational problems that we ignore in our ordinary daily lives may become more evident.
- Being socially isolated can often make us feel stressed if it is a lifestyle we are not used to.
- During the epidemic, stress and anxiety brought about by uncertainty about the future are also common feelings we share.
- A feeling of longing may arise as a result of not being able to meet face to face with our loved ones outside the household as often as before.
- It is possible to feel hopeless about the future and to visualize negative scenarios.

- Being with many identities in the home environment can lead to identity confusion. Being in the roles of roommate, child, sibling, employee/student, spouse, mother/father in the same environment can make it difficult to adapt to each of these identities.
 - A suggestion: Creating separate areas or corners for each role we have to undertake at home can help you organize role confusion and the resulting confusion.

Sharing the Same House 24/7 During the Social Isolation Process

- Being together all the time can be challenging in terms of relationships if it is something we are not used to.
- Within the same house, we may unknowingly engage in actions aimed at entering each other's boundaries and occupying each others's individual space.
- It is important to recognize the need for individual space in any relationship.
 - Everyone needs a distance to protect their individual space.
 - This distance can sometimes be physical and sometimes emotional.
 - For this reason, it is important to respect the individual space needs of the person we share the same house with.
 - It is also important for ourselves to create our own individual space and to maintain this space at the distance we find appropriate.
- In this process where we share the same home environment for long hours, pre-existing and ignored problems in the relationship may arise.
- The process we are going through can sometimes challenge our tolerance, and as a result, we may have arguments or fights with the people we share the same home environment with.
- **A Few Suggestions on How We Can Control Our Anger in Discussions/Fights:**
 - If we are experiencing intense anger, it will not be healthy to talk to the other person at that moment. Initially, it is necessary to take a breath and relax our body and mind.
 - Becoming aware of the underlying causes of our anger by asking ourselves questions such as "What made me so angry just now?", "Is my anger directed at a behavior by the other party, or am I actually angry at something else?". Is an important step in soothing it.
 - After we clarify in our own minds the reasons for the situation that makes us angry, we can explain it to the other person.
 - **A Suggestion: When explaining ourselves, we can share our problem by using the language "I" and "we" avoiding speaking in an accusatory manner if possible. (...I feel sad/angry/anxious etc. because of his/her behavior. Can we think of a solution for this together?"). You can try saying it in your own words.)**
 - It is very important to listen carefully to what the other party is saying.
 - If we try to develop a solution together by listening to both our own and the other person's needs, we will develop a constructive attitude in discussions.
- **Let's think about it when we are in constant conflict with the people we share the same house/environment with.**
 - What could be the reasons that constantly trigger our discussions?
 - Why do the other party's actions make me feel angry or uncomfortable?
 - What behavior I do might make the other party angry? What behavior from him might make me angry?

- Let's put our relationship in front of us and try to look at it from many perspectives as objectively as possible.
- Let's try to find and clarify all possible causes of the conflict.
- Hearing and taking into account the needs of both ourselves and the other person
Let's try to find common ground with him.

Establishing Healthy Communication with People We Share the Same House With During the Pandemic

- It is very important to listen to each other and try to understand each other with all our attention, which is the first condition of healthy communication.
- **If we express our needs and discomforts clearly** to the people we share the same house with, we will establish healthier communication.
- If possible, if we can stay away from insinuations and accusations that may cause the other party to become angry, we can take healthier steps to solve the problem before the discussions turn into a fight.
- Let's try to evaluate within ourselves whether we tend to take on every negative attitude of the other party. If we have a such tendency, we may be more fragile and sensitive in relationships.
- **Instead of reading what is in the other person's mind, asking him about our assumptions allows us to establish healthier communication.**
- **If we do not attribute negative adjectives to each other, we will communicate more positively.** Negative labels or insults make the other party angry and may cause them to launch an opposing attack. Additionally, such attitudes undermine our potential to repair our relationship constructively.

Supporting Ourselves in Adaptation Processes

How Can We Support Our Mental Health in Adapting to New Processes?

- With the coronavirus epidemic, we have entered a brand new period in our lives.
- After the epidemic, the process of adapting to a new life awaits us.
- Supporting our mental health during adaptation processes is important in terms of managing the stress brought by the adaptation process.
- **A few suggestions to support our mental health during adaptation processes:**
- Taking care of our own self-care during challenging times is the most important investment we make in ourselves.
- In order to support our self-care, we should first try not to take on more load than we can carry in our lives.
- We must recognize and determine well the limits of our power regarding the responsibilities we carry.
- **If we cannot determine the limits of our strength well and carry more load than we can handle, this may lead to burnout after a while.**
- Burnout is the state of not being able to continue our daily functioning as a result of experiencing some psychological and physical symptoms due to the feeling of completely depleting our energy as a result of taking on more responsibilities than we can handle.
- We must create spaces for ourselves to **relax to support our personal self-care.** We can think about whatever makes us comfortable and try to discover it by trial and error.

- Physical exercises relax the body and mind. However, let's be careful not to have performance anxiety by setting higher expectations than we can achieve while exercising.
- Let's not forget that relaxation methods are completely personal, and there are many options available. We do not necessarily have to adhere to specific activities.
- We may experience some adaptation difficulties as we continue our lives after the epidemic.
- It is normal to experience some stress and anxiety during the adaptation process.
- If you have difficulty controlling the intense emotions, stress, or anxiety you experience during the adaptation processes and your daily life is negatively affected because of this, you can get psychological help.
- To get support from our unit, write your name, surname, and department to psychologicaldestek@altinbas.edu.tr. You can send an e-mail to.
- If you want, you can follow us on our Instagram account **@altinbaspsikolojidestek**.

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