Exclusive: How to take self-care during pandemic? From eating right to working out, here's what an expert has to say

Dr Sanjeev P. Sahni, a renowned psychologist and author of more than a dozen books on behavioural sciences shares his insights on the necessity to indulge in self-care and the steps one should take in order to take better care of their physical, mental, and emotional health

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed everyone's lives in numerous ways. From the way we perceive our everyday work, to living a socially distanced life, the new reality of life poses a new set of challenges for people.

During these uncertain times, it is vital to take out time for self-care as it can lift mood and make us feel motivated.

1. Food and Mood: It is rightly said that unhealthy eating can cause erratic mood swings. Whatever we eat is clearly visible in the way we behave. With the restrictions on mobility in place, it becomes necessary we also bring a change in our eating habits. Avoid eating white flour as it makes the body lethargic. Having food items that boost our immunity, especially the ones that have an adequate amount of Vitamin C and D is essential. Foods that have omega-3s or even a warm cup of tea or coffee helps in improving mood. We should remember that food is the fuel that keeps running our body, so we should ensure a steady supply of it.

2. Hydration: Having an adequate amount of water every day is essential to stay active throughout the day. Every person should ensure that they drink three-four litres of water every day. It doesn't mean that when we wake up we have 2 litres of water and then somewhere around evening we have one litre. After every hour try having 250 ML or 500 ML of water. It will help in keeping stress away.

3. Working Out: One important lesson that everyone should take from the COVID-19 pandemic is the need to focus on our immunity. Even if the gyms are closed there are several exercises that we can practice at our own places like deep breathing, self-hypnosis, meditation and many more. All these exercises don't require any special equipment at hand and will help in relieving anxiety and stress. People can even use YouTube or self-meditation applications that will guide them regarding the workout techniques. It is necessary to workout everyday as it helps in the release of neurochemicals like serotonin, dopamine which have a positive impact on the body. Yoga is another stress buster that everyone should practice. These exercises, if done in continuation every day for close to one hour will be a very useful tool towards self-care.

4. Playing Indoor Games: It is true that pandemic has impacted our life in so many ways, and most of them might appear negative but it has also given us a chance to spend some time with our family members. Many of us during our childhood days used to play games like Carrom Board, Ludo or Business. Although all these games are available even online now, it is necessary that we play board games. Not only will it reduce your stress but will also bring you close to your loved ones and mend the fences, if there are any.

5. Connect with People: The pandemic might have physically distanced us from people who are close to us but socially we can connect with them. Before the pandemic, we always had this complaint of not finding time to talk to people because of various reasons. The pandemic has provided us with time, sufficient enough to connect with our friends and family. Also, with the uncertainty that all of us are currently facing, we never know what one could be going through. From job loss, to losing a close friend of yours, or even the panic because of COVID-19, we never know the mental condition that an individual might be living in. In such a scenario a phone call might do wonders. Even if there is something that is troubling you from inside, an effective way is to communicate your feelings and it also leads to a longer life.

6. Indulging in Fun Activities: Whether it's cooking, baking, or even listening to music, it is very necessary that we indulge in such an activity every day to keep negative feelings at bay. Such activities are an essential part of self-care. These activities are stress busters and we often ignored them before the pandemic.

It is very easy to neglect ourselves but it takes a little effort in actually doing things that make a positive impact on our body and mind. Regularly practicing self-care activities can have a major impact on our overall well-being.

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