



Relationship Challenges



GENERAL INFORMATION

With social distancing measures to control the spread of the coronavirus, individuals are spending more time with their partners than ever before: working from home, not going anywhere in the evenings. [\(The Conversation\)](#)

- Most spouses spend the bulk of the day apart. Particularly for couples who live in smaller homes, this scenario can make it feel like neither partner has much (or any) personal space. [\(CNN\)](#)
- The stress of having children home (rather than in schools) and financial tensions as some households lose their income can push couples over the brink – complicated by the fear of family members falling ill and general uncertainty. [\(Time\)](#)
- People are also relying on partners for almost all of their social support because they can't see friends or relatives. [\(NYT\)](#)
- Marital irritants during quarantine include: money (too little), screen time (too much), and housework and child care (not evenly split). [\(Bloomberg.com\)](#)

Data after Hurricane Hugo in 1989 showed that, in the year following the hurricane, marriage, birth, and divorce rates increased in the 24 counties declared disaster areas.

[\(Psychology Today\)](#)

#morethan**ever**before

After COVID-19 cases began to subside and people were able to go out again in China, there was a reported surge in divorce filings. More than 300 couples have filed for divorce since February, with some divorce lawyers reporting waiting lists of up to three weeks. ([Yahoo.com](#))

- The city of Xian, in central China, and Dazhou, in Sichuan province, both reported record-high numbers of divorce filings in early March. ([Time](#), [Bloomberg.com](#))
- At the same time, some lucky couples rediscovered marital bliss thanks to the pandemic. ([Bloomberg.com](#))
- Similarly, divorce in Hong Kong's general population in 2004 (in the wake of the 2002-2003 SARS epidemic) was 21% higher than 2002 levels. ([Bloomberg.com](#))
- Experts predicts that the divorce rate will also rise in the U.S. as the coronavirus pandemic unfolds. ([The New Yorker](#))

Domestic violence also appears to be on the rise in China in the wake of the pandemic-related lockdown. ([Time](#))

- Police in one county along the Yangtze River in central Hubei province, near where the pandemic began in Wuhan, received 162 reports of domestic violence in February—three times more than the 47 reported during the same month in 2019.

Travel restrictions have fast-tracked many relationships, at least temporarily as it is advised that couples currently living separately should remain apart for the duration of the lockdown – or move in together. ([The Guardian](#))

TIPS FOR COPING WITH RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

Communicate. It doesn't matter as much how couples communicate during the coronavirus shelter-in-place, but simply that they try to do so. For some, this might mean periodic huddles to deliver updates on what's coming next. For others, it could be a daily check-in that rates how each partner feels physically and emotionally.

Embrace space. Acknowledge the importance of alone time. Put on headphones and meditate, or go for a walk.

Keep it light. Some have found solace in sharing stories of work-related video conferencing gone wrong. Others have even embraced #CovidConfessions, a Friday night social media phenomenon through which people share truths about their lives they'd kept secret until the pandemic.

Establish routines. Assign roles for each day: who cooks, who cleans, who answers the phone, and so on.

Get therapy. Regular therapy through telehealth services can help people work through even the most intense anxiety.

Focus on the little things. Simply taking the time to stop, look at your partner and tell them, 'Thank you,' can make a huge difference.



RESOURCES

CNN

[Tips for maintaining a healthy marriage through the coronavirus lockdown](#)

THE INDEPENDENT

[How to ensure your relationship survives self-isolation](#)

NEW YORK TIMES

[How to help your relationship survive a lockdown](#)

NEWSWEEK

[Advice on how couples can cope during coronavirus social distancing and home isolation](#)

TALKSPACE

[6 tips to keep from destroying your relationship during quarantine](#)

TIME

[11 ways to stay married amid coronavirus concerns](#)

THE CONVERSATION

[The coronavirus lockdown could test your relationship](#)

YAHOO

[COVID-19 doesn't have to end in divorce](#)

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