

# MANAGING DOWNTIME



Regardless of whether you are working in an office or from home, your time spent not working is important for maintaining and strengthening family connections, refreshing resources for the next day and resting. Every individual has their own unique home situation with different challenges. Choosing what is best for your own individual circumstance is paramount.

## 1 BE REALISTIC

You will have good days and bad days and that's ok. What you are able to achieve will be affected by what is happening right now. Higher stress may mean that you and your family member's ability to manage emotions is little stretched and that more negative behaviours may surface. Have realistic expectations for yourself and your loved ones. Pick your battles and believe that everyone is doing their best.

*Be gentle  
with  
yourself*

## 2 MAKE YOURSELF HAPPY

The levels of "feel good" chemicals in our brain can be negatively impacted by the ongoing uncertainty of the COVID crisis. Dopamine is one of these chemicals. When we do something that brings us joy, our dopamine levels increase and we feel happy. Intentionally engaging in our favourite activities is important for increasing our dopamine and balancing out the negative emotions.



## 3 ITS QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

Additional stress and higher levels of fatigue can make it hard for us to have the energy to engage with our family after work. Try to focus on the quality of time you spend together rather than the quantity. Intentionally set aside time to be completely present and engaged in the moment. A shorter amount of quality time is worth more than a longer time only half engaged.



## 4 KEEP YOUR ROUTINE

Our brain is a prediction machine and it is at its happiest when it knows what is coming next. In a time when certainty is hard to come by, keeping to a familiar schedule or creating routines for your day can help reduce anxiety for you and your family. This creates a sense of certainty and predictability to your day.



## 5 CHECK IN / CHECK OUT OF WORK

This is particularly relevant if you are working from home. As we cannot create geographical distance between work and home, we need to psychologically define our start and stop work times. This can be a mantra or a routine that helps you to mentally engage at the start of the work day and disconnect at the end. You can enhance this psychological check-in and check-out by creating a physical space in your home where you go to work and then leave when the working day is over.

