

#StayHome... maintaining family balance and tranquillity!

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Recently, the discussion that concerns all of us either interpersonally or socially refers to the pandemic illness of Coronavirus (COVID-19). According to the World Health Organization, a pandemic is defined as a new disease that is spreading worldwide and most people are not immune to it (World Health Organization, 2010).

Developments are constantly on the move and preventive measures internationally adopted affect our daily life, our way of working and the way we relate to our surrounding and our close people. What we are experiencing is unprecedented and compels us to adapt to new conditions in a sudden manner without being prepared for it. It is certain that we cannot enjoy some of our favourite habits in the way we used to or at all. The adaptation to a new reality is not an easy task and it is often a very stressful process.

Some of our habits and activities may have been “frozen” due to the urgent need to stay home in order to prevent the virus from spreading to the general population, however existing mental or family problems do not “freeze” and continue to exist. Unfortunately, phenomena such as child abuse, domestic violence, online bullying continue to be virus-free. They may be intensified by the general increase in stress, forced restraint and stressful adaptation to a new daily routine.

In any case, people should be aware that even if we stay at home, we can seek help at every level.

- We give time to the expression of our anger and we take a “break”. Long hours at home can be result to groaning or even rickety, which can lead to unexplained anger. Yes! It’s anger! It is of a great importance the anger relief in a functional way. Imagine that every time we are angry, we behave violently to our surrounding, which due to the circumstances stays at home for a long time period. Let’s think about it! Violence would saturate our behaviour and we would become accustomed to it. Consequently, if something bothers us

in this long-standing interaction with those around us, we refer to it. We communicate. Dialogue is the most effective way to communicate our emotions.

- Another unpleasant feeling that can result from a long stay at home is the rusting, the feeling of boredom. And now what do I do to deal with it? The answer is trivial but fully effective! I find another member of the family or of the house and I spend my creative time with it. We communicate with others online, we play games. A practical tip is to arrange the home to avoid another reason for family "conflict".
- We are discussing the "why". What makes you angry? Is there something happening to you; Do you want to discuss it? Can I help? Did I do something that bothered you? These are some of the first questions we can ask ourselves or others whenever we observe that things at home tend to get distracted.
- Given the circumstances, the time spent at home is plentiful. Special attention should therefore be paid to the time children spend online and in front of electronic screens in general. We define the way and the time limit that children are allowed to navigate. We monitor their online activity so that if the parent's / guardian's intervention in terms of any suspicious or strange action is considered necessary, this intervention shall be prompt and helpful. Finally, we explain to the children that this happens solely for safety reasons and not due to lack of confidence or strict control.
- In conclusion, it is particularly important to emphasize that parents and children can set some time of the day to devote qualitative time to themselves. Thus, both parents / guardians and children can be relieved under this compulsory circumstance and take a break.

However, under no circumstances should we confuse quarrels / disputes and family conflicts that are normal in a family system, with the domestic violence and abuse. Here are some general assumptions and tips to remember:

- No one has the right to exercise violence or touch a child in a way that will make them feel uncomfortable, ashamed, angry, and afraid.
- Your body belongs only to you! You have the right to say NO if something / someone makes you feel uncomfortable.
- We remind children that it is not safe to keep secrets, especially when they violate basic family rules.

- We remind children that there are people who hurt them, but they are not to blame and should immediately seek help.
- Call the "SOS 1056 National Helpline for Children" with your child. They may need help in the future so they will know where and how to get it.
- If I become aware that a child is being abused or in danger for any reason, it is my obligation to inform the "SOS 1056 National Helpline" or the competent authorities. Let's stop child abuse! It is our responsibility!

For any further information or clarification you can call «TheLine SOS 1056», which is supported by specialized scientific staff (Social Workers and Psychologists) in order to respond effectively to the questions of children and adults, providing them with psychosocial support in managing the emerging issues and the daily updates.

The Line is available 24 hours per day, with free of charge mobile and landline calling.

Bibliography

World Health Organization. (2010, February 24). What is a pandemic? Retrieved from the World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/frequently_asked_questions/pandemic/en/