



MAKING SOCIAL DISTANCING WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

Things' Pascale Devlin provides a family lawyer's perspective on the impact of Coronavirus and offers top tips on how households can adjust to new ways of living.

It may not seem a natural fit for a divorce lawyer to be providing advice about how to keep a family unit together. However, it's a good perspective from someone who sees the fallout when things go wrong.

COMMUNICATION

It's rare to have a discussion with a client about the reasons for the breakdown of their relationship without 'lack of communication' being mentioned. Now that many families will be spending increased amounts of time with one another in close proximity, there is potential for things to escalate and communication to suffer. It is really important to keep communication a priority and in particular:

- Telling your family if something is bothering you and discussing possible solutions.
- Avoiding things building up and frustrations mounting.
- Remembering your wider social group. Embrace social media and set up video calls with friends and family members. Maintain your social scene by arranging a virtual cocktail hour, book club or coffee mornings.

BOUNDARIES

Going from a daily routine of partners and children being out at work or school five days a week, to being in the same household potentially 24/7 is a huge adjustment. Make it clear from the outset what each family member needs. For example, it is ok to say you need a bit of 'me time' or that you want some space to do a yoga session.



HELPING EACH OTHER OUT

Often people feeling a lack of support can lead to the breakdown of their relationship. Set up rotas for cooking, cleaning and housework to prevent you from feeling there is a lack of support from your family. It will take a team effort to get through the coming weeks, so make sure the household workload is shared.

DEVICE-FREE ZONE

As we all face social distancing, it may be tempting to dedicate even more of our day to staring at screens and immersing ourselves in the online world. It can be infuriating to see family members engrossed in their screens, so why not suggest meal times or a certain time of the day is device-free.

GET CREATIVE

We are all going to be tested to find new ways to fill our evenings now that we are unable to go to pubs, restaurants or other social places. Why not dig out old board games, host family 'Come dine with me' evenings or screen a movie.

To find out more about anything covered in this article, please contact Pascale Devlin or another member of Things' Family team.



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