



The Shackleton Relationships Project
Practical tips for surviving self-isolating
with your partner

New COVID-19 measures restricting our freedom to go out are bound to put couple relationships under pressure, even when family members are not ill. Yet keeping your closest relationships strong is even more important in a time of crisis. Using findings on what helps long-term relationships to thrive and the 10 critical questions to ask before committing long term, researchers at the University of Exeter have the following practical tips for surviving with your partner in the coming weeks:

- 1. Approach the issue as a team:** As we face possible illness or illness of a loved one and potential money worries, pulling together as a team is vital to maintaining a strong and enduring relationship with your partner.
- 2. Build your friendship:** Make good use of the additional time you have by setting aside time to build your friendship – go for a walk together; cook a nice meal for your partner; be creative in making time for fun.
- 3. Use the time to make plans:** This enforced isolation will not last forever. Use the time to make plans for your future to keep you both positive.
- 4. Keep your expectations realistic:** We are living in stressful times. Tempers will fray. Household budgets will be stretched. Don't expect things to be plain sailing.
- 5. Try to see the best in your partner:** Acknowledge that you are each trying your best in difficult circumstances and try to be tolerant. Don't overreact to small irritations.
- 6. Show you care:** Show your partner you care through small gestures - a cup of tea for a partner who is working online shows that you're thinking of them. Divide household chores fairly if you are both working from home.
- 7. Keep communicating:** You are both likely to be anxious. Talk about how you're feeling. Listen to and acknowledge your partner's concerns.
- 8. Commit to working through this time together:** Looking to a positive future together will help you to work through these uncertain times.
- 9. Be flexible:** As government advice changes, the restrictions on how we live our life together may change. Try to be flexible and accommodate your partner's changing needs or concerns.
- 10. Get support:** Try to stay connected with family and friends for support and encouragement. Don't rely solely on your partner.