Helpful Information for Grad Students Living On-Campus

Co-living or living with roommates and social distancing can be hard but there are some extra precautions you can take while co-living in the new normal. This easy reference guide will take you through some ideas about talking to roommates, common reactions and resources.

Common Reactions:
Please recognize that there can be a wide range of reactions and that over the next few days or weeks you may experience periods of:

- Anxiety, worry, or panic
- Difficulty concentrating/sleeping
- Feeling helpless/confused
- Anger
- Excitement, relief, or curiosity
- Social withdrawal
- Overexposure to media
- Hyper-vigilance to your health
- Feelings of loss/grief

1. Talk about it.
Have an apartment meeting and discuss what each of you are doing to prevent spread. This could include discussing what everyone is doing individually as far as social distancing, and a plan for your new living arrangement. The current advice from the CDC is to be at least 6-feet away from each other.

Have an open and honest discussion about your feelings on socializing in the apartment or leaving the apartment. Be realistic about the potential risks of germs being brought into the house. Consider developing a process for people or items entering and exiting the house.

2. Clean frequently.
Encourage everyone clean up after themselves in the common areas in your apartment at all times, but this is especially important right now. Be sure to thoroughly wash all dishes and utensils you use, and you can even use disinfecting wipes to wipe down counters, bathrooms, and kitchen supplies after using them.

3. Keep your distance
Living together in an apartment, doesn't mean you have to all hang out together in the same areas. Getting outside is really important for your physical and mental health but consider taking a walk or run instead of close contact sports (e.g. pick-up basketball or soccer games).

If at all possible, minimize close contact with others. MIT Medical advises all MIT community members to maintain good hygiene habits and to practice social distancing. An article that shares more information about social distancing may be found here.

4. Stay informed
Get the facts. Stay informed with the latest health and campus information from MIT Medical.
5. Experiencing Anxiety
Anxiety is an emotion that tends to seek out confirmation. While at times this can be validating, it can also intensify the emotion, leaving you feeling helpless and overwhelmed. Acknowledge your emotion with understanding, and then turn your mind to other activities. Try a 5 min. breathing exercise which can be found here https://at250.mit.edu/

6. “I think my friend or roommate was exposed to Covid-19”
First, it is important that you stay calm, show empathy and remember this is a difficult time for your friend.

Call the MIT Medical COVID-19 phone line at 617-253-4865. NOTE: The phone will be answered by an administrative secretary who cannot provide medical advice.
- Give the person answering the phone YOUR name and phone number and tell them the best way to reach you.
- Tell them you are requesting a “Public Health Consultation”.
- Be patient. We are handling a high volume of calls that require follow-up, so you may not hear back immediately.
- After speaking with you, we will contact the individual in question to obtain specific details about the exposure/possible exposure.
- Depending on those details, we may contact the individual’s local department of public health.
- We will then get back in touch with you to provide advice.

Seek additional help!
Individuals who feel an overwhelming worry or anxiety should seek additional support.

I’m feeling stressed about COVID-19
- A web-based support group series for MIT students. These confidential online group discussions are free for all MIT Students info: http://ow.ly/xiYc50yH3gB

I am worried, who can I talk to??
- A good place to start is GradSupport (for graduate student concerns) and Student Support Services (for undergraduate concerns).
- You can connect to GradSupport by emailing gradsupport@mit.edu or calling 617-253-4860.
- You can connect to S3 by emailing s3-support@mit.edu or calling 617-253-4861.
- MIT will continue to offer all of its resources, including Student Mental Health and Counseling. You can call and talk through any concern you have at any time.

Other Important phones numbers for support:
MIT GAIN: (844) MIT-GAIN (grad students)
Urgent Care: (617) 253-1311
Urgent Mental Health: (617) 253-2916
After-hours support through the Dean on Call: (617) 253-1212