

## Social Distancing Survival Jar for Moms

**What:** The Social Distancing Survival Jar is designed to offer ideas on how to cope with unhelpful thoughts and not so good feelings during COVID-19. Find a jar that you can use then cut out the following suggested skills and ideas. Pick one or as many as you want at a time. Try to spend at least 20 minutes exploring what works or what doesn't work for you. And, feel free to add more of your own as you go 😊. This can actually be your forever survival jar as we embrace the new normal.

Here are some guidelines to help in dealing with feelings that one should be mindful of:

- Feelings come and go. They don't last forever.
- You are NOT your feelings and your feelings are NOT you.
- Most people react to get a quick release, but end up feeling guilty or regretful afterwards. Feelings are generally not the problem, negative behaviors or actions are the problem.
- You can create a space between your feelings and actions using effective coping skills and come up with a response that reflects your true intention.

**When:** There are many ways you can use the *Social Distancing Survival Jar*. You can use it as a reminder in the morning when you feel neutral and fresh or a couple times throughout the day to keep you grounded. Another time that would be highly recommended is when you are aware that big feelings are coming up. If you look at the feeling thermometer rating scale here, a good time to use the jar is when you are between number 5 and number 7. Most people remember to practice coping skills when it is already too late. That's why the skill doesn't work as well as they had hoped.

Feelings Thermometer

1 = I'm feeling great

2 = I am relaxed and happy

3 = I am cool and collected "I've got this."

4 = I am okay

5 = This is hard, but I am in control

6 = I'm starting to feel uncomfortable

6.5 = I am overwhelmed and feel like crying when too many demands are put on me

7 = I am heating up

8 = I am boiling

9 = I am ready to explode

10 = I am exploding out of control



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Do something silly or wild that you normally don't do. Be safe and creative, of course. Just be free and don't criticize and judge yourself 😊

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Focus on your breathing and come back to the present moment. Leave your mind alone.

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Taking a break, in a quiet space to be alone for 15 or 20 minutes can make all the difference.

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Take an afternoon cat nap. It is easier to be kind when you are rested.

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Go outside by yourself with a cup of coffee or tea and just watch the clouds.

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Enjoy a glass of wine or juice with your favorite magazine, book, or catalog for an hour.

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Eat cereal for dinner, why not! You are not a bad mom.

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Run around in the grass barefoot.

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Stretch your body. Loosen it up.

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Dream about getting a massage when you can safely leave the house again.

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Take a bubble bath or a nice long shower. Feel free to light a candle in your favorite scent.

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Give yourself a pedicure or a manicure. Keep your hopes up that one day you will be able to treat yourself to nice, beautiful, clean nails and toes again.

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Do something crafty. Explore and develop a new hobby.

Call a friend. It's good to vent and get it out with someone you trust.

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Create a space at home that is meant for your relaxation. Don't let anyone come in.

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Unplug from emails, the news, and social medias for a couple of hours during the day.

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Go for a drive alone and listen to anything you want in the car, as loud as you want!

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Exercise. Make sure you get hot enough and perspire for it to count.

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Eat cookies or ice cream alone in the bathroom so you don't have to share.

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Put on make-up and feel amazing.

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Spend time in the garden.

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Say 'no' even when it's hard. Building up resentment will backfire later.

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You deserve to sleep in. Make it happen.

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Set a reminder in your phone saying, "I am doing my best.", "I am enough.", "I am loved.", or "I am appreciated." It might seem funny to you at first, but this is one way to rewire your brain.

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Listen to your favorite podcast or audiobook or find a topic that interests you and dive into it.

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The more help you can get, the better shape you will be in when you come out of social distancing. Ask for help. Don't expect people to read your mind, especially men and kids.

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Try therapy if you have been feeling overwhelmed and need emotional support.  
Communicate often.

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Write at least one thing in a gratitude journal every day.

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Commit to self-care.

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Your number one priority is to keep your family safe by staying home and practicing social distancing. You are not responsible for everyone's happiness. Remind yourself of that when you have an urge to want to fix everything.

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It is perfectly fine to cry. You are human.

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You are NOT responsible for entertaining your kiddos. By doing so, an opportunity might be missed for them to learn to entertain themselves and be content on their own, an important life skill everyone needs.

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After a long period of time of being home, some kiddos might have a hard time separating from their parents and integrating themselves back to the new normal. You can start preparing them by making sure that they have enough alone time each day, take on some responsibilities for themselves or around the house, and continue to exercise their independence and freedom.

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You are not a victim. No need to act like a teacher, an entertainer, a police officer, or a maid during COVID-19. You are a wife and a mom who deserves to be treated with respect and love.

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You are appreciated even though at times it seems unfair and overwhelming. Start being aware of your own needs and make sure you take some alone time or communicate to get your need met before the feeling gets too big.

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Comparing yourself with others can be a tricky slope. It is not at all kind or fair to you.

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If you are working from home, create a transition or set boundaries between work life and home life by faking commute with a 10-15 minute walk to clear your head before and after work, spray your office space with a calming scent when you are about to start working or after breaks, or try to be creative as best you can.

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Being flexible will get you through this difficult time. Let go of trying to be perfect or feeling you have to do the “shoulds”.

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