Social Distancing, Isolation, and Quarantine: What’s the Difference?

What is social distancing?
Social distancing is a way to keep people from interacting closely to prevent spread of an infectious disease. Everyone should practice social distancing, whether or not they have been exposed. Schools and gathering places such as movie theaters may close, as well as sports events and religious services.

Social distancing includes:
- Avoiding handshakes and crowds,
- Staying 6 feet away from people,
- Staying home if you feel sick.

What is Quarantine?
Quarantines can be placed on groups of people in communities to separate and restricts the movement of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease who may become sick. It lasts long enough to ensure the person has not contracted an infectious disease.

What is isolation?
Isolation occurs after a diagnosis of COVID-19. This helps prevent the spread of the disease by separating people who are sick from those who are not. It lasts as long as the disease is contagious.

Ways to cope:
- Reaching out to family and/or friends is one of the best ways to reduce anxiety, depression, loneliness, and boredom during social distancing, quarantine, and isolation.
  - Use the telephone, email, text messaging, and social media to connect with friends, family, and others.
  - Talk “face to face” with friends and loved ones using Skype or FaceTime.
  - If approved by health authorities and your health care providers, arrange for your friends and loved ones to bring you newspapers, movies, and books. These items can be left on your doorstep.

More tips on social distancing, isolation and quarantine are available here.