

HOW TO ENSURE A CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN WITH YOUR PARTNER DOESN'T END IN DIVORCE

BY [SOPHIA WATERFIELD](#) ON 3/17/20 AT 12:38 PM EDT

American couples could soon break up because of the coronavirus outbreak due to self-isolation and lockdowns without taking steps to solidify their relationship, warns an American psychologist.

Just as we judge trends of the disease by what happens in other countries, those in relationships should be concerned that following quarantine for coronavirus, an unprecedented number of couples requested divorce appointments in districts of Xi'an, capital of Northwest China's Shaanxi Province.

According to *The Global Times*, the surge in divorce appointments was the result of the pandemic causing couples to be "bound with each other at home for over a month" and it created conflict and the desire for impulsive divorces.

But how do self-isolation and quarantine affect marital relations?

"Quarantine is stressful—a review of the evidence published in *The Lancet* indicates that quarantine can have negative psychological effects including anger, confusion and in some cases, post-traumatic stress symptoms," David Cates, Ph.D., a licensed psychologist and director of behavioral health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, told *Newsweek*.

"Factors that increase the stress of quarantine include a longer quarantine duration, fear of infection, boredom, inadequate supplies, inadequate information and financial loss," Cates said.

[The rise in panic buying](#) and uncertainty [over paid sick leave for Americans](#) will likely contribute to this stress, meaning that American couples could be susceptible to impulsive divorce requests.

"Being together in a small space for a much longer period than usual under stressful conditions means more opportunities to amplify both positive and negative dynamics," Cates told *Newsweek*. "My guess is that relationships with a strong foundation will survive and may even flourish, whereas those characterized by poor negotiation skills, destructive communication and lack of appreciation are more likely to buckle under the stress."

Cates said that research by John Gottman shows that the ratio of positive to negative interactions during a conflict is critical—couples with at least five positive comments or gestures for every negative interaction tend to be happy.

"So, to survive and thrive during quarantine, couples should look for opportunities to show interest, find areas of agreement, express affection and appreciation and demonstrate empathy. And they need to do this during times of conflict. They should also recognize that worry, fear, stress and guilt are expected and normal reactions during quarantine and not criticize one another for expressing these feelings."

<https://www.newsweek.com/coronavirus-lockdown-partner-divorce-1492780>

Reading comprehension

- What could happen to couples because of a lockdown?
- What happened in districts of Xi'an?
- How come that long-term lockdowns lead to marital breakdowns?
- What could be remedies to overcome marital crisis?
- Résume en français ce que tu as compris dans le document.

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