

AMindset offers FREE Counselling for those in Quarantine
Learn More: <https://amindset.hk/quarantine>



Quarantine Crib Sheet for AMindset

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BACKGROUND

For the latest information on quarantine rules please visit:

<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk>

Who undergoes quarantine in HK?

1. All incoming travellers must undergo 14-21 days of quarantine, with very few exemptions.
2. A person who is a close contact or a close contact of a close contact of an infected person

Arrival process at HKIA

1. The process to enter HK can be very stressful, as prior to departure many are faced with flight cancellations, hotel booking issues, getting the right documentation for pre-departure covid tests (HK requires tests to be from ISO15189 qualified laboratories)
2. Upon landing in HK, travellers must fill out a landing form and go through a very tedious checkpoint process at the airport. They will undergo a covid swab test, get all their documents checked (one checkpoint for each different document), get their contact numbers tested, and finally wait for a negative test (2-4 hours minimum) before being able to proceed to immigration and baggage claim. This is physically tiring as it is a lot of walking and waiting around.
3. After immigration and baggage claim, travellers line up for designated buses to their quarantine hotels - the ride can take anywhere from 20min to 2 hours.

Who gets sent to Penny's Bay?

1. Persons who are close contacts or close contacts of a close contact (for Delta/Omicron) of someone who tested positive
2. Persons who arrived from an A+ country will spend their first 4/7 days of quarantine in PB
3. Persons who, during their hotel quarantine, violated their quarantine order (e.g. by stepping out of their hotel rooms)
4. Some domestic helpers, for 21 days quarantine

Please note that the situation is constantly evolving, and changes are implemented with very short notice, so make sure to read the latest up to date information on the government website stated above.

For more details on quarantine rules and logistics, read this FAQ:

https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/faq_for_close_contacts_eng.pdf

TYPICAL QUARANTINE PATHWAYS



NEGATIVE: RELEASE AFTER Q ORDER EXPIRES

POSITIVE: HOSPITAL / SUCCESSIVE NEGATIVE TESTS / POST-RECOVERY HOTEL / RELEASE

BEFORE GOING INTO QUARANTINE

1. Join the HK Quarantine Support Group (HKQSG) on FB

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2788738214495345/>

2. If you are travelling, check the HKQSG for tips from fellow travellers

3. If you are going to PB - prepare! Adequate preparation is key to a better experience. HKQSG has a tried and tested list of things to pack.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2788738214495345/search/?q=penny%20bay%20packing%20list>

4. If you are part of a group being sent to PB, get in touch with others. There's strength in numbers.

5. Inform your employer and trusted friends about your situation; they may form your support system during this period.

6. Join PB support group on FB/WhatsApp

7. Join respective hotel WhatsApp groups/ Facebook groups – These groups pass on a lot of information and resources (eg. exercise equipment, washing machines etc)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2788738214495345/search/?q=HK%20Q%20Hotel%20WA%2FSignal%2FFB%20groups>

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SO YOU'RE GOING TO PB...

Common reactions

1. "This is a violation of my rights! They can't do this to me!"
Fight or flight reaction

Potential strategy

Normalization: Hundreds of people have gone through the same situation over the past 2 years. Remember, this is a Hong Kong law. It is an offence to violate the quarantine order by refusing to comply. While some people have involved lawyers and their consulates in a bid to avoid quarantine, those efforts have been mostly futile. The sooner one accepts the situation, the better.

2. "PB is a prison, it's inhumane!"

Exaggeration

Potential strategy

Aim to see something positive even in this grim situation: The frustration you feel is totally understandable, yet we ought to think that there is something good that can be taken out of it. People are there to be monitored should they become sick from their exposure to the Covid patient or should they be carrying a new variant. This is aimed at helping them get treatment promptly and avoid infecting others.

Get accurate information; know what to expect: PB is property adjacent to Disneyland (its entrance is next to the car park) specifically developed as a quarantine facility. There are no barb wires, no armed guards patrolling the property. No Squid Game-like announcements on speakers. Staff members are mostly genial.

There are hundreds of prefabricated housing units. Each two-story building has around 16 ensuite rooms; each unit is around 200 sq ft. Inside these units, the feel is of a basic college dorm room/backpacker hotel. There are two single beds, one table, one small flatscreen TV with local channels, a kettle, a hairdryer, a zip-up closet, a normal size bathroom (toilet, shower, faucet) with hot water, and A/C that doubles up as a heater on colder days. The room is clean. For perspective, this is about the same size as a standard room at a 3-star hotel (e.g. Best Western) or some HK 'micro-apartments. (Check out photos shared on HKQSG.)

Internet connections require a phone with data from which you can tether your devices. The PB staff provides free data SIM cards on request. A regular HK CSL phone with data will be able to play Netflix, YouTube, connect to a VPN, etc smoothly. Refrigerators may be provided for medical reasons.

Food is catered by Cathy Pacific's caterer so expect economy-class quality meals. Meal choices include Chinese, Western, Indian, and vegetarian.

The upside: Unlike a hotel room, the windows - front and back - can be opened any time for as long as you want! There is also plenty of natural light coming into your room. As the rooms open to a "courtyard", opening the door to slide your rubbish bag out can be refreshing.

Focus on what you can control: Make your stay more comfortable! Personalise the space. Consider bringing:

- Your best duvet, linen, towels, pillows, cushions, mats, a roll-up mattress
- A decorative item from home (a small lamp/child's lamp, fairy lights, a small plant, a small rug, play mat)
- Your favourite munchies (with long shelf life), arrange regular deliveries from family/friends of fruits and vegetables and other food items that do not require refrigeration.
- Items other people have brought to PB: a coffee maker, a musical instrument, a USB speaker, a small cooker (but be careful with this), essential oils diffuser, Nintendo Switch

3. "I can't cope with the isolation!"
Catastrophising, fortune telling

Potential strategy

Mindset change: Hundreds of people have gone through this situation, they managed to cope, so can I!

Take it one day at a time and make the most of it. Follow a routine. Make a daily activity planner. Focus on your release day - each day is one day closer to freedom.

Set some weekly goals: do x more push-ups than the previous week, read one book per week, binge watch a show, clean up your computer storage, organise photos, tour a museum online, create and post a challenge... etc.

Have FaceTime with a friend or family member every day. Open your window and make friends with your neighbours - just shout or wave. Organize online happy hours to celebrate Q milestones. Make small talk with the staff who bring your food or do your swabs. They also feel isolated while working in PB.

Don't forget to exercise! You may move the beds to allow you to create your exercise space. You can also connect a Nintendo to the TV.

If you have any medical condition that requires close monitoring, a disability, a child with special needs, etc., communicate your needs to the CHP via the WhatsApp number they have provided or send a text to 2125 2600 (Quarantine Centre Taskforce of CHP). Sort this out immediately.

Panic attacks: Breathing and visualization techniques. For example, download the guided breathing and visualization audio tracks here to your phone and activate. <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/staying-well/relaxation-exercises>

Insomnia: Listen to guided meditation: For example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mlr3RsUWrdo>

Guided meditation for kids (and kids at heart):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAgUMTexjVs&list=PL8snGkhBF7njO0QvtE97AJFL3xZYQSGh5>

Take note of previous PTSD that may be triggered by isolation.

4. "What/How will I tell my child(ren) that we're going into quarantine?"

Potential strategy

Be mindful of mirroring. The child will sense if a parent is angry/agitated/fearful. If they think that you're going somewhere bad, that will set the tone for the whole experience. Carefully choose your words, children may associate words like "prison", "inmate" (which are often used by adults to describe quarantine) with something very scary.

Communicate according to the children's developmental age. Parents have "sold" the experience as a different kind of camp or as a long staycation. Give them a general idea of what to expect but offer an upside: "We might not be able to play with your friends in person while on staycation, but we can do online playdates.... Because we won't have any distractions, this is the best time to finish that Lego set or that book or watch the movie we never had a chance to see.... This is a special time with only mommy, remember that time we...(example). You will have your adventure another day with daddy too."

If a parent needs to accompany a child into quarantine, consider sending the parent who is likely to be more resilient. During the DBIS quarantine, most parents were quite engaged with their children, playing, coming up with daily challenges, staging online magic shows, exercises, etc. Those kids adjusted better to the situation as they lost track of time and of why they were there.

If a parent is going, but the children are not, communicate according to the children's developmental age. Use analogies. Reassure them that you are still available despite not being physically present. "Mom is going away for several days. It's like when I'm travelling. Unfortunately, you can't join me, but we can always keep connected via video call every day. We can still do things together, like reading a book before bedtime or playing but in a different way." Perhaps

leave them with a fun task/goal to do during your absence. Or offer a “reward” that they can look forward to when you’re back.

5. “I can’t cope alone with a baby/toddler!”
Catastrophising/Fortune telling

Potential strategy

Change mindset: Taking care of a baby/toddler while in quarantine has its challenges. Plenty of moms have gone through this experience and managed, I’ve got this! Take it one day at a time and make the most of it.

Preparation is key to making quarantine bearable.

Pack the essentials, especially medicines for common ailments. However, don’t over the top. Carry only what you can carry with a child in tow. There is no porter service at PB, you will have to carry your luggage up the steps if you’re given a second storey room. Other items can be delivered to you by a family member/friend. It is also handy to have the contact details of your doctor or doctors who can do online consultations.

Pack or have delivered a regular supply of cheap art materials and toys. Ikea sells a long roll of paper for doodles. Living Plaza has all sorts of arts and crafts. BlueTac/clay is versatile.

Have fruits, vegetables that can be eaten raw like baby carrots, cucumbers, snacks, and treats delivered to you regularly. Your child may need the food they’re used to.

Maintain a semblance of your daily routine. Say, 8 am breakfast & hygiene, 9 open the window and play “I spy”... Find the fun in the mundane.

If you have special needs, communicate them to the CHP via Whatsapp or to 2125 2600 (Quarantine Centre Taskforce of CHP). Sort this out as soon as possible.

6. “Omg, my whole family is being separated!”

Potential strategy

See #4 and #5. There are a few family rooms/rooms for the mobility impaired. Communicate with the CHP immediately to request for this type of accommodation. Depending on the size of your family, you may be split into two or more rooms (one adult must stay with children).

HOTEL QUARANTINE

1. Make the space your own – move the furniture around to maximize your space! Space is scarce in hotel rooms, but try to make the space your own, it's your home for the next 14/21 days
2. Make a countdown timetable/schedule. This is great for keeping track of your swab test dates as well as being able to plan activities throughout your quarantine.
 - Some suggestions: Scheduling video calls with friends or family (Someone in quarantine started a "21 chats for 21 days" where they connected with friends/ family and acquaintances' throughout quarantine- does not have to be long, 15 mins/ 30 mins etc!)
 - Scheduling mundane tasks – eg, making the bed (making a hotel bed is notoriously difficult (no fitted sheets) but it is very satisfying to complete! Clean sheets and a sense of accomplishment! (YouTube has tutorials)

WHILE IN QUARANTINE

1. "I'm feeling the blues/My depression is back."
 - Activity planning: Stick to a routine. Account for each hour of your day from waking up to bedtime.
 - Have daily Facetime/video calls with family members/friends, even workmates
 - Goal setting: Set up some weekly SMART goals - e.g. I will do 30 mins of calisthenics every day.
 - Be forward-looking - one more wake up means one less day in quarantine
 - Make friends open your front window and if you see someone doing the same in the building across, wave, shout and say hello. The other person is likely to appreciate it. If you're part of a group, organize online happy hours.
 - Meditate for a good night's sleep. Lay off the caffeine.
 - If on prescription medication, continue to take them and let CHP know if medication is running low.

2. Panic attacks

- Stabilize yourself by using Breathing and visualization exercises. See #3
- Identify the triggers and mitigate them

3. "I can't do this anymore (having a breakdown)"

- Stabilize: Breathing and visualization exercises
- Break down what's difficult, address one issue at a time

4. "I miss my family so much"

- Have daily Facetime/video calls with family members
- Do something with them – watch the same show (synchronized) while staying on a video call
- Do something for them – online errands, make them a hand-crafted gift from quarantine
- Celebrate with them – day 5, day 10, etc.

5. Blaming self/someone for the situation

- It may take some time and require an effort, yet the best is to accept that you are where you are. "Should haves" can't undo what has happened. No use in blaming others.
- Focus on your release day. One day at a time and make the most of it.

6. Positive test

- Those who test positive are normally taken to the North Lantau Infection Control Centre (HKICC)
- Acceptance is key.
- Avoid #5
- HKICC is built specifically to treat Covid patients. HK has an exemplary track record in treating Covid patients. As in any other hospital anywhere in the world, patience and being polite go a long way.

- Follow potential strategies above as appropriate
- A parent can accompany a baby/toddler in the hospital. Raise the issue with CHP immediately.
- If feeling physically unwell in hotel quarantine - call DOH hotline 2125 1999. Be persistent.

AFTER QUARANTINE

1. Having a hard time readjusting to the real world

- Focus on the positive: Freedom! Good health! Family and friends!
- Spend time in nature to get more fresh air, embrace space and mobility
- Eat healthily
- Give it time
- Get some post-quarantine counselling at [AMindset!](#)
- Let yourself slowly readjust- you may even want to keep to the routine created in quarantine

2. Kids

- Make the end of your quarantine a happy milestone
- Resume pre-quarantine routine or slowly transition from quarantine routine
- Re-explore the outside world together - see what's new in the neighbourhood, go to your favourite restaurant, etc.
- Seek help if your child is having a challenging time after quarantine (nightmares, behavioural change, etc.)

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APPENDIX: USEFUL RESOURCES

FOR VISA/ENTRY EMERGENCY QUERIES

HK Immigration Hotline (852) 1868 or (852) 1868 0000

HOTLINES:

CHP Quarantine Centre Taskforce: 2125 2600

Samaritans: 2896 0000 (Bilingual) / 2389 2222 (Chinese- 24 Hour hotline)

Hong Kong Red Cross Psychological Support Hotline: 3628 1180 (Chinese and English speaking) 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Hong Kong Red Cross Psychological Support Service "Shall We Talk" (Chinese & English speaking) WhatsApp: 5164 5040/ Telegram: @hkrcshallwetalk (make an appointment for the service)

JUSTONE 24-Hour Community Mental Health Hotline: 3512 2626 (24 Hr)

HKU QUARANTINE SUPPORT KIT

<https://wellcation21.csrp.hku.hk/>

<https://wellcation.csrp.hku.hk/>

JOURNALING/PLANNING

Five-minute journal

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/569cb1fb05caa74dde7b842c/t/5acf7bbb0e2e7224ab2f7edc/1523547067523/Five_Minute_Journal_Quickstart.pdf

Activity planner templates

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/ActivityDiary.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/WeeklyPlanner.pdf>

https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/~/_media/CCI/Mental-Health-Professionals/Depression/Depression-Worksheets/Depression-Worksheet---03---Weekly-Activity-Schedule.pdf