

MANAGING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

MEDIA / SOCIAL MEDIA

- Stop watching and listening to everything and everyone on the coronavirus. Constant and overexposure can exacerbate anxiety, stress and depression
- Get facts from **reliable sources** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts-h.pdf>
- Listen to podcasts on positive things you are interested in
- Ignore the opinions, rumors and speculation posted on Facebook, Snapchat, etc.
- Temporarily blocking/unfollowing friends who promote hysteria/alarmist/overly negative views

CONTROL

- Focus on what you can control. Anxiety and distress increase when focus is on things outside our control
 - o You can't control the coronavirus, but you can control social distancing, hand washing, etc.
 - o You can't control others' so take responsibility for your choices and actions
- Don't feel guilty for cancelling events or appointments – practice self-care and healthy limit setting
- Make sure you have and take your medications needed, as possible get a 90-day supply

SELF-CARE

- Normalize your stress and anxiety, the situation **is not normal**, a healthy dose of anxiety is reasonable
- Don't allow your anxiety to go into panic as it can paralyze you. Avoid others who distress you
- Maintain a healthy diet. Don't just eat chips and carbs. It can become a very unhealthy distractor
- Sleep if possible 7- 8 hrs. nightly; stress & anxiety exhaust us physically and mentally – sleep restores
- Use alcohol in moderation. It's a depressant; overuse can zap our energy, motivation and worsen anxiety and depression
- Exercise individually or as a family in house or in back yard, exercise reduces distress and tension
 - o Find an online program or create your own
 - o Play badminton, croquet, gardening, chores, walk, bike ride, etc. Enjoy the fresh air
- Catch up on those things you haven't been able to get to such as taxes, reading, homework, etc.

FAMILY / SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

- Nurture and support each other. Use this time to get caught up with others, play board games, play cards, watch movies, cook together, play an instrument, sing...make up new games or new variations
- Keep busy and maintain structure – find healthy distractors such as reading, schoolwork, drawing, etc.
- Caring for / reaching out to others takes the focus away from your anxiety and sadness; nurtures social connection and enhances our mental health; thus, call, write, or email others

- Reach out to an elderly person who may be afraid to go out. Offer to pick up groceries or run errands
- Ideas for small children: 1) Fill up bathtub w/Large Legos, Duplo's – have them play in swim suits; 2) place a large container on floor, put a smaller one inside filled with water and waterproof toys – have child use a slotted spoon to get the toys; 3) Put toys in tub of water; decide which ones sink or float

RELAXATION

- Practice mindfulness, yoga, there are many free apps to download such as Headspace and CALM
 - o Meditate using calming apps or calming music, soft tones like rainfall or the ocean
- Practice deep breathing – deep breaths causing stomach to fill up with air, flex and release muscles
- Journal effectively gets your thoughts out of your head and onto paper or tablet and ultimately will calm your anxieties and de-stress you
- Watch funny movies, YouTube videos, read jokes...LAUGH – it releases endorphins and elevates mood

FAITH

- Use your Faith to give you comfort, strength and guidance. Use prayer as a form of mindfulness
- Read your Bible or another spiritual or inspiring book
- Attend virtual Faith services

HOPE

- Always have hope, without hope anxiety and depression will worsen
- Hope is about possibility – like watching a baby take their first step, Will I make it?
- Hope is a choice and encourages us to keep trying keep striving keep believing

KEY WEBSITES

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirusoutbreak>

https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf

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<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>

<https://veteranscrisisline.net> – text 838255

<https://focusproject.org/family-skills> - has some great family activities to consider

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>

<https://www.CSTOnline.org>

ONLINE CLASSES

<https://www.freecodecamp.org/news/ivy-league-free-online-courses-a0d7ae675869/>

<https://www.education.com/> -- for preschool – 5th grade

<https://www.adventureacademy.com/> -- for K-8th grade

<https://www.scholastic.com/home/>

QUOTES

Some famous quotes from previous leaders in desperate times;

- ***COURAGE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR BUT THE MANAGEMENT OF IT*** – Winston Churchill
- ***WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, BUT FEAR ITSELF*** – Franklin D. Roosevelt