
SELF-CARE

During COVID-19



This week, I have spoken to many people about their heightened emotions since the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). I've taken time to listen and to also reflect on my own emotional response. I would like to share some thoughts with you as we navigate the waters as a community and individually.

Everyone has a definition of what is a stressful event for them. And everyone reacts to those events differently. If you find that you have not felt impacted at all by reports of the coronavirus outbreak, that is a perfectly okay response. If you find that you have been more anxious, sad, irritable or angry lately, that is completely normal, too. Our reaction to stressful events is a product of a multitude of factors including, our proximity to the event, socioeconomic status, personal history, and personality. Some people who may respond more strongly include individuals who are managing a mental health condition (like anxiety), children, and first responders/healthcare professionals.

Sometimes responses to a stressful event don't present as emotions. Instead, you may notice a change in sleep patterns; change in appetite; difficulty concentrating; worsening of a chronic health problem (like GERD or chronic pain); change in behavior (stocking up on essentials or changing your routine); or increased use of alcohol or other drugs.

It is really important that during stressful times, you continue to take care of your physical *and* mental health. That means sticking to your treatment plan including taking medications as prescribed; attending routine appointments; adhering to any special diet you may have. It also means reaching out to your supports—family, friends, doctors, therapists, and support groups. You’re connecting to them not just for yourself, but for them, too. Let’s all check in with each other on this, okay?

Here are a few ways that we can support ourselves right now:

1. Limit our intake of media. The news media works on the strategy of repeating stories hourly or more often. Very often news stories will be repeated without any additional information added. Repeated exposure to the same stressful event can exacerbate our stress response. It’s good to stay in the know, but consider limiting your ingestion of news media, especially if you are starting to feel overwhelmed.
2. Take care of our body. Drink lots of water, eat healthy, and continue with our normal exercise routine (as approved by our primary doctor). Good diet, exercise, and sleep are the trifecta for health (that’s why you have to listen to me talk about it over and over and over...)

“If you hibernate like a bear, entertain yourself with indoor hobbies, and wait for summertime T-shirt weather, you will probably avoid the serious effects of COVID-19.”

~ Steven Magee

3. Make time to relax. With the news of any large scale adverse event, there is an inherent sense of urgency. We can get wrapped up the energy of outside actors (newscasters, politicians, fundraisers, etc.). Constant vigilance is not good for our bodies. To counteract it, use your relaxation coping skills like breathing, journaling, or listening to music.

4. Talk about it. Connect with others about how we are feeling and what concerns we have. Connect with them about other things, too. There is no reason to stop living our lives right now.



Adapt & Overcome

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5. Take appropriate precautions to keep yourself healthy. Follow the CDC guidelines prevention: wash your hands regularly, avoid touching your face, adhere to social distancing recommendations, avoid contact with people known to be sick, and if a someone in your household becomes sick be proactive and self-quarantine for the safety of your loved ones and community. For more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>
6. Remain hopeful.

If you find that you are having a difficult time coping or that you are feeling overwhelmed, please reach out. We will come up with a strategy together.

— LW!
Christina

Resources:

Information about COVID-19 is being updated frequently, so here are some additional resources to find updated information as needed. Some of these resources have informed the information above:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>

<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4885.pdf>

Brevard County & Florida

<https://www.brevardfl.gov>

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/COVID-19/covid19-toolkit.html>