

Coping with Coronavirus Stress

Four mental health strategies to help you during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recognize your stress- Stress is a normal part of life. It is important to recognize your emotional state in order to understand and manage your emotions. Stress often cause symptoms such as:

- Sadness, confusion, irritability, anger, uneasiness, and suicidal thoughts
- Reduced concentration, efficiency, and productivity
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Interpersonal problems (e.g., lies, defensiveness, communication concerns)
- Tension (e.g., headaches, jaw clenching, teeth grinding)
- Body pain (e.g., headaches, muscle spasms)
- Reduced energy (e.g., tiredness, weakness, fatigue)
- Sleeping problems (e.g., insomnia, nightmares)

Manage what you can; release what you cannot

While there is a lot of uncertainty surrounding the virus, it is important to manage what you can with the information you are provided but also release the need to control what you cannot. A key difference between stress and anxiety is the false sense of control that may arise from over worrying and overcompensating. In addition to seeking information from reputable sources, try to be mindful of the myths that may be misleading and pulling your focus from what you can control.

Know your limits

- Pay attention to your signs/symptoms and the trends that make your stress better or worse
- Set boundaries to avoid overextending yourself
- Limit your consumption of the news

Practice Self Care (Active process of acknowledging and tending to your needs)

- Stay active
- Get adequate rest
- Eat nutritious foods
- Utilize coping skills – read, journal, listen to music, talk to someone, deep breathing, meditate, watch a movie, play with your pet, etc

Taken from *Psychology Today* by Shainna Ali, Ph.D, LMHC