

## ADULTS COPING WITH STRESS

### KEY WORDS:

COVID-19, Stress, anxiety, cope, react, adults

Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations.

Reactions during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- Fear and worry about your own health status and that of your loved ones who may have been exposed to COVID-19
- Feeling stressed or overwhelmed
- Frustration, irritability, or anger
- Feeling helpless
- Sadness, tearfulness, and/or loss of interest in usual enjoyable activities
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
- Physical symptoms, such as increased heart rate, stomach upset, low energy, or other uncomfortable sensations
- Isolating or withdrawing from others, and/or fear of going to public spaces

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment plans during an emergency and monitor for any new symptoms.

Connect with family, friends, and others in your community. Take care of yourself and each other, and know when and how to seek help. Call your healthcare provider if stress reactions interfere with your daily activities for several days in a row.

## THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOURSELF:

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of COVID-19.
- Seek accurate information.
- Stay up to date with advice and support.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeatedly. Try to do some other activities you enjoy to return to your normal life.
- Connect with others. Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships.
- Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking.
- Maintain your day-to-day normal activities and routine where possible.
- Help your family engage in fun and meaningful activities consistent with your family and cultural values
- Recognize that feelings such as loneliness, boredom, fear of contracting disease, anxiety, stress, and panic are normal reactions to a stressful situation such as a disease outbreak.
- Remember, you are a role model for your children. How you handle this stressful situation can affect how your children manage their worries.

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### Reference:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>
- <https://services.unimelb.edu.au/counsel/resources/wellbeing/coronavirus-covid-19-managing-stress-and-anxiety>
- <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019>