

Coping with Uncertainty, Anxiety, & Stress During These Difficult Times

Focus on What You Can Control & Let Go of What You Can't

- This can include small things (planning for the day ahead, what you'd like for dinner) and bigger things (establishing weekly routines, prioritizing how you want to spend your time and where you want to spend your energy).
- Acknowledge your worries and concerns, but try not to dwell on them. Allow yourself to feel and observe the uncertainty and other reactions you're experiencing. Then try to let go of those feelings and move on to what you need to next.
- Catch yourself if you are only focusing on the negative or "worst-case scenarios." Push back against negative, future-oriented thinking by returning to the present and reminding yourself about your current priorities.

Self-Care and Self-Compassion

- Take care of your body, mind, and soul—exercise, eat well, get good sleep, breathe, pray, and spend time doing enjoyable and rejuvenating activities.
- Connect with others, take breaks, and seek support from trusted family and friends.
- Take your own advice and "practice what you preach:" If a friend came to you with a similar worry or concern, what would you tell her or him?
- Follow a "good enough is good enough" approach. Lower your usual expectations, reduce the temptation to compare yourself to others, and be kind with yourself.

Set Limits and Boundaries (with yourself and others)

- Stay informed but avoid too much exposure to the news and other media. When you're worried and stressed it can be hard to look away, but limit the time you watch TV, check your phone, and have the computer in front of you.
- Choose your arguments and "fights" carefully. If you disagree with someone or are passionate about areas of injustice, you may feel like you have to address and confront these issues all the time. We only have so much energy and patience to give, and it can be draining and exhausting to feel like we're fighting all the time.
- Set boundaries with others when discussing sensitive and emotional topics. Monitor your emotions and communicate them to others as you need to.

Re-Frame Current Challenges and Shift Your Perspective

- Challenging times and difficult situations are opportunities to reflect on past successes. How have you faced previous challenges? How have you increased your self-awareness, perseverance, and resilience? Give yourself credit, think about what was helpful, and identify how you can respond to current challenges based on past experiences.
- Develop new skills and take risks outside your comfort zone. When we face uncertain and unknown circumstances, we have opportunities to learn more about ourselves

and identify new ways of doing things. You can challenge yourself to try something you've always want to do or learn and develop new knowledge and skills. These experiences can increase your comfort and confidence to face both current and future challenges.

Let Your Values Be Your Guide

- Reconnect to your core values and how you want to live your life. Focus on what is most important and spend less time thinking about things are less important. Give your time, energy, support, money to the people and causes that are most important to you.
- Be fully engaged with those around you, your conversations with others, and be intentional about what you want to communicate.

Practice Gratitude & Actually Count Your Blessings

- Even if you have faced significant challenges and hardships, make it a practice to think about what you are grateful for and the blessings you have in your life.
- Show and express your gratitude to others with your words, actions, and time.
- Take a “Reverse Bucket List” approach. Rather than thinking about what you want to do when the we return to the “new normal,” think about what you've already accomplished and experienced in your life. How have these experiences contributed to who you are, what you've learned about yourself and others, and what you appreciate most in life? How can these reflections inform your current priorities?

Other Tips:

- Planning for the Future—Five days at a time (no more!)
- Mindfulness in the moment: take deep breathes and focus on the next breath.
 - Five Senses Meditation: what do I see, hear, smell, feel, and taste in this moment?
- Prayer or Meditation of Loving Kindness (for yourself and others)
 - May I be happy, may I be safe, may I be healthy, may I be peaceful, may I give and receive appreciation today.
 - May others be happy, may others be safe, ...
 - May I forgive others and ask that others forgive me
 - Keep taking deep breathes and repeat

Finally, ask for help and be honest about how you're feeling, especially if you're struggling or your concerns are having a more significant impact on your daily life.

- Talk to a loved one or trusted person to get support.
- Consider talking to a mental health professional for additional support. Counseling is more accessible than ever with increased telemental health options.