

MANAGING ANXIETY DURING COVID-19

We want to acknowledge that things are hard right now. These are uncertain times, and the situation is changing rapidly. We recognize this is a situation that no one has faced before and acknowledge there is uncertainty and concern present. It can be helpful to remember life has always presented us with risks and most of us have weathered storms over the course of our lives.

Can you consider resources and activities have helped you through difficult times in the past? What and who has helped you to cope? Draw on strategies that have worked before.

Remind yourself that it's normal to have more difficult feelings than usual and that you are not alone. At this time, we are all in this together! Allow yourself to notice and feel however you might be feeling right now. Then go back to the first point and remember that life is uncertain, and you don't need to jump on the panic bandwagon.

When the facts are already scary it is easy to fall into traps in our thinking—catastrophizing the worst-case scenario, or overgeneralizing outcomes. To combat this, try to catch yourself going down a path of unhelpful or extreme thinking. You can ask yourself: “Is this thought based in fact and is it helpful to me right now?” or “What do I know right now?” “Am I ok right now?” Stick to the actual facts. Thoughts are not facts! Our minds have a tendency to go to negative thoughts and extremes. Stay with what you know.

How *much* information do you find helpful? You may want to limit your intake to specific times of day. Five to ten minutes per day is more than enough time to get the information you need to stay fully informed and safe. Make sure you are accessing accurate information. In the absence of information there is anxiety and rumours. Stick to trusted new sources.

What *types* of information do you find helpful? Keeping up to date on all the different ways community members are panicking may increase your own alarm. Use trusted sources, such as:

-  **Government of Canada**
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>
-  **Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit:**
<https://www.hkpr.on.ca/>
-  **Ontario Ministry of Health**
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>
-  **World Health Organization**
<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

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Focus on What you Can Control:

- ✚ Your positive attitude and the way you relate to others and yourself
- ✚ Carving out some normalcy in your day. Structure your day with regular routines
- ✚ Taking breaks and allow yourself to do things you enjoy while social distancing—cooking, reading, walking, listening to the radio or podcasts.
- ✚ Taking care of yourself:
 - Physical exercise and activity –walking, running, stretching, yoga, dancing, biking
 - Listen to music you love –lots of musicians are doing performances online
 - Watch a movie
 - Sing! (like no one is listening 😊)
 - Maintain good nutrition
 - Drink water
 - Limit alcohol and other substances
 - Maintain regular sleep
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- ✚ Going outside: walk, run, stroll, see what you can discover as Spring emerges
- ✚ Practicing deep breathing, relaxation, meditation:
- ✚ Insight Timer has many relaxation, meditation guided practices and stress relieving exercises that are free
 - ✚ <https://insighttimer.com/>
- ✚ Tapping into your sense of humour such as watching a funny movie, sharing jokes and funny stories
- ✚ Considering recreational activities such as jigsaw puzzles, board games, card games, drawing, painting, crafting, sewing, knitting, crocheting etc.
- ✚ Maintaining ‘social distancing’ while considering ways to maintain “social connection” with your family, friends and community by other means than face to face contact
- ✚ Turning off the news

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- ✚ Following recommendations to care for self and family, such as social distancing, hand washing, not touching face, cleaning surface, staying home unless essential to travel, being helpful as I am able
- ✚ Limiting social media if it is creating stress for you
- ✚ Being patient with yourself and others, being kind and be helpful as you are able

Ask for help if you need it:

4 Counties Crisis – 24/7 crisis phone line 1 866 995 9933

Kids Help Phone 24/7

- ✚ Online Chat and Information: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>
- ✚ Phone 1 800 668 -6868
- ✚ Text: 686868

Haliburton Highlands Family Health Team	705 455 9220
Haliburton Highlands Mental Health Services	705 286 4575
Haliburton Highlands Community Support Services	705 457 2941

"And the very last thing we need right now, is a mindset of mutual distancing. We actually need to be thinking in the exact opposite way: Every hand that we don't shake must become a phone call that we place. Every embrace that we avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth and concern. Every inch and every foot that we physically place between ourselves and another, must become a thought as to how we might be of help to that other, should the need arise."

Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky

Additional Resources

- ✚ <https://www.mcleanhospital.org/news/caring-your-mental-health-despite-coronavirus>
- ✚ <https://www.anxietycanada.com/articles/what-to-do-if-you-are-anxious-or-worried-about-coronavirus-covid-19/>