Taking Care of Ourselves in Troubled Times

1. Notice when you’re feeling depleted, tired, and worn down. Way before your tank goes to empty, you’ll want to get into the habit of doing things that are rejuvenating and make you feel better. Those things will be different for everyone, so think about the day-to-day things which make you feel better, notice them, and make them a part of your life.
2. Make room for beauty, humor, nature, and other positive things every day. There’s a lot we’re seeing that’s negative, but the wonderful things are still here. Make sure your eyes and senses get to take in something good every day, even if it’s a small thing. Don’t let them go unnoticed. What beautiful thing did you see today? What’s a piece of good news that you learned today? Share it!
3. Eat nutritious foods. Hard times may make you lean towards comfort foods that aren’t that good for you in the long run. If you can, feed your body well so that you have a better chance of staying healthy and well.
4. If you feel angry, irritable, and upset, know that many other people are feeling this way too. We’re seeing an upsurge in violence in homes and on the streets. Recognize these emotions, know that many are feeling similarly, and don’t take any actions until you can calm yourself down. Acting on these negative feelings means we’ll see more and more emotional and physical violence. Each of us can be part of the solution.
5. Think about putting yourself on a low-violence diet. We might play video games with violence, we might see violence in movies, we get it in the news, and it can be in our neighborhoods. You might feel better on a low-violence diet. This way how you entertain yourself, what you see, what you hear about, and what you read is not all about violence.
6. Try and get good sleep. For many, this means not exercising in the evening, not fighting, or doing things that increase stress and worry before bedtime. It means the evenings are for winding down and relaxing. Lots of important things happened while we sleep, it’s not only for rest but also for repair and restoration. It’s how we keep healthy inside and out. Good bedtime rituals help.
7. If you have a chronic illness, when times are stressful you might feel less motivated to stay on top of it and do the things you need to. What’s not going right out in the world shouldn’t mean that we don’t prize our health. You’re important. Your future is important. You’re important to those who love you.
8. Know what’s a priority and what’s not. This way you don’t sweat the small stuff.
9. There are a lot of risks, maybe you’re worried about Covid-19, and being exposed close-hand to violence. There might be other risks in your life too. Know your limits and learn to say *No* when there are risks you don’t want to take. It might be hard at first, but part of the stress we feel is about there being a lot of risks, and feeling like we don’t have control over them. You do have some control over the risks you’re exposed to, it’s okay to use that control.

1. Worrying about our climate and ecology might be one of your concerns. The way you care about the world matters and the way you cherish it locally is important. Some people feed birds, put bird baths out, or they might plant milkweed to help keep monarch butterflies from going extinct. Some people might help clean up the parks and beaches so people can enjoy them safely, and increase the beauty of these places. Some people might limit the use of the car to help keep the air better for themselves and others. These kinds of actions do help, they help us and the environment. They do make the world better.
2. Your worry might be about disasters like fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, and health-impacting heatwaves. They’re getting more frequent and more intense. One thing which might help with this worry is to think about the concrete things you can do to be prepared. Give yourself and those you love a good chance of doing well through these events by learning about preparedness. Taking steps to learn about safety and preparedness helps to transform worry into positive actions you can take.
3. Know your circle of friends who can call on each other for support. We all need others.
4. Take breaks and pace yourself. The issues our world faces can’t be solved quickly no matter how hard we try.
5. Get the kinds of help you need and help others to learn about available help. After the crisis is over, think about getting sustained help.
* Put in your zip code and look up the nearest foodbank: <https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank>
* The 988 text of phoneline for mental health crisis
* It’s easy to find out if there’s a pharmaceutical assistance program to lower the cost of a prescribed medication: <https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare/#/pharmaceutical-assistance-program?year=2022&lang=en>
* Going through troubled times with alcohol dependency can be extra difficult. One option is to find an Alcoholics Anonymous group: <https://www.aa.org/find-aa>
* Here’s how to find a Narcotics Anonymous group: <https://www.na.org/meetingsearch/>
* Help if you’re in a violent relationship: <https://www.thehotline.org/get-help/domestic-violence-legal-help/> and also: <https://www.dvpi.org/24-hour-hotline>
* 24/7 support for teens: <https://www.crisistextline.org/> or text: HELLO to 741741
* 24/7 sexual assault support hotline and text line: <https://www.rainn.org/>
* 24/7 parenting support: <https://www.parentshelpingparents.org/stressline>
* 24/7 help for those with disabilities being abused: <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/abuse-in-disability-communities/>
* Sexually transmitted illness support: <https://thestiproject.com/std-resources/std-help-hotlines/>
* Online chat, text line, and phone support for those with eating disorders and their loved ones: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/help-support/contact-helpline>