

How To Maintain Your Balance During The Coronavirus Crisis

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4 Ways to Cope with Anxiety and Fear



Infectious disease outbreaks, like the current Coronavirus (Covid 19), can be scary and can affect our mental health.

It's perfectly normal to feel anxious, overwhelmed and vulnerable as we read news about the outbreak and wonder what it means in our lives, as entire cities have been quarantined and travel restrictions have been put in place throughout the world.

Because threats we cannot control or do not understand can create extreme fear, trust that scientists and public health officials are working overtime to better understand the virus and are looking at ways to limit its impact.

While it's important to stay informed, there are also many things we can do to support and manage our wellbeing by making physically and emotionally healthy choices.

Try to practice these healthy choices in times like these and especially when you feel like the stress of this virus outbreak is getting to you.

4 WAYS TO COPE

1. Embrace Limit Setting Practices On Your Media Exposure

- Step away from media reports for a time if you are compulsively checking the news.

- You can choose how you will receive and consume information about the outbreak.
- Try to avoid speculation and look up reputable sources on the outbreak and try not to make assumptions as this can fuel anxiety. Having access to good quality information about the virus can help you feel more in control.
- Try to adopt a more clinical and curious approach as you follow news reports about the virus and find credible sources you can trust.
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a webpage dedicated to information on the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak. You may also find useful information from local or state public health agencies or even your family physician.

2. Embrace Communication Practices With Your Family

- Communicate with your family your plans for good health.
- Involve your children and ask age appropriate questions about what they have heard about the outbreak and support them, without causing them alarm.
- Try to minimize the negative impact it has on your children by explaining the facts to them.
- Discuss the news with them but try and avoid over-exposure to coverage of the virus.
- Stay truthful and give age-appropriate information.
- Children thrive on routines and schedules which help allay distress. Remember that they will observe your behaviors and emotions for cues on how to manage their own feelings during this time.
- Include elderly and/or isolated family/friends in these conversations.

3.Embrace Best Physical Health Practices

- Keep your immune system happy and healthy with a balanced diet and the right amount of sleep you need to feel well-rested every night.
- Take Normal, healthy precautions as both flu and coronaviruses are spread through everyday contact, through touch, a cough, or a sneeze.
- Wash your hands.
- If you're sick, stay home and don't go to work or out in the world.
- If you're not sick, stay away from close contact with a person who is and engage in healthy habits when it comes to cleanliness.
- We should also be aware of and avoid increasing habits that may not be helpful in the long term, like smoking and drinking.

4.Embrace Best Mental Health Practices

- Engage in mindfulness or meditation techniques to help relieve your stress and reduce your anxiety.
- Engage in self-talk to undo the irrational thoughts coming into your head with rational, fact-based responses.
- Try to stay connected with family and friends that you can trust if you feel anxious.
- Maintain social networks to foster a sense of normality and provide valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress.

- Overwhelmed individuals who feel distressed, disproportionately nervous or sad and find it affecting their job performance or interpersonal relationships, should seek additional help with a trained and experienced mental health professional.
- If you already have health anxiety or generalized anxiety disorder, you are more likely to worry about potential threats like the coronavirus as you may already frequently overestimate threats and underestimate your ability to cope.