Staying Home & Staying Healthy

Managing Stress and Anxiety During COVID-19

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Awareness of Stressors

- Duration of the pandemic
- Fear of infection
- Frustration & boredom
- Information overload
Self Care Tips

1. Creating structure: making schedules for home & school
2. Healthy diet: impacts mental health
3. Developing healthy sleep schedule to reduce stress
4. Validation of emotional state without comparative suffering
5. Non-screen related activities
Self Care Tip #1

1. Creating structure: making schedules for home & school
   - Adds an element of control & comfort
   - Provides a sense of accomplishment
2. Food intake impacts mental health

- Nutrients to feed your brain
- Scheduling meals/snacks
- Being mindful of food shaming
- Physical Health ↔ Mental Health
- Resources for food
  - The Pantry
  - The Giving Garden
  - Local Food banks
Self Care Tip #3

3. Developing healthy sleep schedule to reduce stress

- Employ good conditioning
- Lack of Sleep ↔ Stress
4. Validation of emotional state without comparative suffering
   
   • Comparative suffering = “How can I complain,” we ask ourselves, “when I know people who have it so much worse?”
   
   • Emotional state is on a spectrum and it is not binary
     
     Apathy       Empathy
     
   • Comparative suffering downplays our own suffering
Examples of Comparative Suffering

“I feel bad for complaining about my family. I know that they are frustrating me, but some people are alone and without family. I shouldn’t feel annoyed with them.”

“I shouldn’t feel this bad about what’s going on. Everyone is going through the same problems right now.”
Opting Out of

COMPARATIVE SUFFERING

“

Let’s keep our struggles in perspective but also allow ourselves and others to feel and express them.
Self Care Tip #5

5. Non-screen related activities

- Music: Listen, Play, and Sing
- Cooking: Solitary or in Group

Scientists may have found the world’s most relaxing song.

“Weightless” by Marconi Union was shown to reduce study participants’ stress by 65%.
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Manage Stress and Anxiety
Managing Anxiety

Information Overload

- Stay informed while avoiding exposure to excessive media

The Information Diet
Read. Not too much. Mostly facts.
http://amzn.to/infodiet
Exercise that will get heart rate up:

- Dance
- Yoga
- Treadmill
- Walking (dog, cat, dragon)
- Jumping jacks
- Jumping rope

Joyful Movement!
What can I control and what I cannot control?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Within My Control</th>
<th>Outside My Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building a routine</td>
<td>Other’s people’s decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Intake</td>
<td>Government’s actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercising</td>
<td>UWT opening or closing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeking support</td>
<td>The news</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

- Mindfulness Meditation
- Body Scan
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Grounding with Your Senses
- Guided Visualization
Relaxed Breathing

Diaphragmatic Breathing

1. Put a hand on your chest and place the other on your stomach.
2. Take a breath, feeling your stomach move outward.
4. Repeat the exercise as you are able.

Hug your pet; stuffed animal; pillow!
# Awareness of Thoughts & Feelings

## Thought Record Sheet – 7 column

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation / Trigger</th>
<th>Feelings Emotions – (Rate 0 – 100%) Body sensations</th>
<th>Unhelpful Thoughts / Images</th>
<th>Facts that support the unhelpful thought</th>
<th>Facts that provide evidence against the unhelpful thought</th>
<th>Alternative, more realistic and balanced perspective</th>
<th>Outcome Re-rate emotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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What emotion did I feel at that time? What else? How intense was it?
What did I notice in my body? Where did I feel it?
What went through my mind? What disturbed me? What did those thoughts/images/memories mean to me, or say about me or the situation? What am I responding to? What ‘button’ is this pressing for me? What would be the worst thing about that, or that could happen?
What are the facts? What facts do I have that the unhelpful thought/s are totally true?

STOPP! Take a breath…
What would someone else say about this situation? What’s the bigger picture? Is there another way of seeing it? What advice would I give someone else? Is my reaction in proportion to the actual event? Is this really as important as it seems?

What am I feeling now? (0-100%)
What could I do differently? What would be more effective?
Do what works! Act wisely. What will be most helpful for me or the situation? What will the consequences be?

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Carol Vivyan 2010, adapted from Padesky 1995. Permission to use for therapy purposes
Resources

- https://www.theawakenetwork.com/free-online-meditation-resources-for-the-time-of-social-distancing/
- https:


References
(Managing Stress & Anxiety)


