

DEALING WITH STRESS DURING CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Everyone reacts differently to stressful information. The outbreak of COVID-19 can feel especially overwhelming to us as we are bombarded by the media and social media outlets about this virus. It is important that we recognize when our stress levels are rising. According to the CDC, too much stress can make itself known as:

- Fear and worry about your own health status and that of your loved ones who may have been exposed to COVID-19
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs

During these uncertain times, coping with these feelings in healthy ways and getting help when you need it will be of greatest importance. **Here are some things you can do to support yourself as recommended by SAMHSA** (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration):

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of COVID-19.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeatedly. Try to do some other activities you enjoy to return to your normal life.
- Connect with others. Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships.
- Seek assistance via the CareHere by connecting with a certified [CareHere Health Coach](#) to help you process your feelings. Your coach, and Human Resource Department, can connect you with Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services as well.
- Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking.
- People with pre-existing mental health conditions should continue with their treatment plans during an emergency and monitor for any new symptoms.
- **Call your healthcare provider if stress reactions interfere with your daily activities for several days in a row.**

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Emotional Health: Tips for taking care of yourself – Centers for Disease Control
<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare.asp>

Podcast (25 min): Coronavirus Anxiety – American Psychological Association
<https://www.apa.org/research/action/speaking-of-psychology/coronavirus-anxiety>

5 Tips for How to View Media Coverage about COVID-19 to Keep Things in Perspective – American Psychological Association
<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/pandemics>

Feeling Prepared: Safety and Readiness tips – American Red Cross
<https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/coronavirus-safety-and-readiness-tips-for-you.html>

Staying active: 25 ways to get moving at home – American Heart Association
<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/getting-active/25-ways-to-get-moving-at-home-infographic>

Eating well: Cooking at Home – Help Guide
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-eating/cooking-at-home.htm>