

Dealing with Anxiety Related to COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease)

It is not uncommon to experience anxiety and fear when hearing information about an infectious disease that is impacting individuals across the globe. Social distancing is also causing us all to temporarily change our daily routine, which can feel uncomfortable. It is important to learn the facts related to your risks, and also speak to your personal physician about any concerns you may have about your own health and COVID-19. If you are experiencing anxiety or fear related to COVID-19, these tips may help you feel more comfortable.

It is normal to feel a range of emotions when you hear about COVID-19 in the news or in your social/family circle. Emotions may include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Fear

Everything you feel and think is normal. However, at times our feelings keep us from living our day to day life in a way that works for us. This can happen when our emotions impact our ability to make decisions or carry on with our activities of daily life. If you ever feel overwhelmed by your feelings, there are actions you can take to begin to feel more in control. Options to help you deal with your feelings include:

- Time with friends and family (virtually or by telephone if they are not living with you)
- Hobbies
- Exercise
- Meditation
- Listening to music
- Time outdoors (maintain a safe 6-foot distance from others)
- Taking a break from news media and social media
- Learning about COVID-19 and understanding your actual risk and how to protect yourself
- Talking to your doctor
- Talking to a mental health professional or calling 211

Learning the facts about COVID-19 can be the most helpful way to help alleviate anxiety and fear. For official guidance, you can visit the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov and speak to your own physician. You can also call the (enter state or local COVID-19 info line here) 24 hours a day for information and guidance at (add info line number here).

Once you educate yourself, if you are still feeling anxiety, it may be helpful to get understanding and empathy from a mental health professional who is knowledgeable about anxiety and how to manage it. For immediate and confidential support 24/7, you can call 211. If you see a mental health professional already, this would be a good time to call and speak to them about your thoughts and feelings. Give yourself time and space to talk about how you feel anytime your thoughts and emotions become intrusive or uncomfortable. You always deserve the opportunity to explore what is on your mind, and help is always available by calling 211.

Empowering yourself with the facts about COVID-19, washing your hands, avoiding touching your face, and finding activities that distract you from virus news are all excellent ways to make yourself feel better. Know that there is a wealth of resources, education, and support available to you. Also, know that (enter department name here) cares about you, and we will be there for you and your family if ever you need us.

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, always call 911.