

# **HOW TO COPE WITH ANXIETY IN THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS**

**BY**

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The fear and uncertainty around this rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation is fueling everyone's anxiety. Everything is shutting down around us including schools, all public events, offices and religious institutions. The United States declared a state of emergency as the number of COVID-19 cases continue to increase.

So how can one manage anxiety during this pandemic?

## **TIPS FOR MANAGING ANXIETY DURING THIS CRISIS**

### **NORMALIZE THE ANXIETY**

It is important to recognize that anxiety is an appropriate emotion at this time. Anxiety is normal when one is faced with uncertainty and a feeling of not being able to control things in our life. When we make plans to handle what we can control our anxiety begins to decrease.

### **USE THE ANXIETY TO BE PROACTIVE**

Ask yourself what you can do to help this situation? Here are some suggestions:

## **PRACTICE SELF-CARE**

Eat 3 meals a day with healthy snacks.

Get 7-8 hours of sleep to improve your immune system.

Stay hydrated by drinking water.

Remember to take your medication as prescribed.

Exercise at home.

## **LIMIT MEDIA EXPOSURE**

Be selective in where you get your news about the virus; go to sites, like the Center for Disease Control (CDC), to learn how to protect yourself and your family.

Do not watch the news all day.

## **HAND WASHING**

Wash your hands more frequently and for 20 seconds with soap and water.

If this isn't available, use hand sanitizers.

Do not touch your face: this is how the virus can enter your body.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

If you can work from home do it.

Consider telemedicine options if sick.

If you are in therapy, consider video sessions.

Stay away from anyone who is ill.

If you are ill, stay at home.

Do not shake hands or hug.

Stay 6 feet away from people.

Avoid any public events.  
Avoid being in crowds.  
Shop for food online or  
when the stores are less crowded.  
Avoid the gym and exercise  
at home.

## **AVOID LONELINESS**

Loneliness is one of the biggest  
causes of depression.

Stay in touch with family members and  
friends by telephone or social media.

(reach out to others especially the elderly, people at risk, or  
anyone who lives alone)

Use Facetime or Skype to communicate.

## **STOCK UP BUT DON'T HOARD**

Make sure you have enough medications.

(aim for a 90-day supply, when possible) Stock up on 2-3  
weeks of food and water.

## **HOW TO MANAGE THE ANXIETY OF YOUR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS**

Be honest and give them information  
they can understand according to their  
ages. Inform them that there is a virus going around like the flu  
but it can be worse. Let them know they can protect  
themselves by washing their hands frequently and not  
touching their face.

Understand that children don't always express  
anxiety like adults. They may become

irritable and act out or become fearful and clingy. Some children may regress or withdraw.

Children pick up on adults' anxiety.

Try to be calm yourself when speaking to your children. Let them ask questions and don't offer too much information. Assure them there is hope and this situation will not last forever. Do projects together. Use this time as an opportunity to bond with your children.

Help them learn other ways to socialize without direct contact such as social media, group chats, and even appropriate gaming.

## **STRUCTURE YOUR DAY**

Structure and routine comfort us. Humans function much better when we have a schedule with goals and regular times to do certain activities.

Be sure to include some fun activities daily.

## **CANCEL- IT'S JUST NOT WORTH IT!**

Cancel the following:

Vacations

Concerts

Religious events

Birthday parties

Only travel when necessary

**REMEMBER: WE ARE TRYING TO SAVE LIVES!**

## **HELP OTHER PEOPLE**

Reach out to people who are high risk such as the elderly, those who are ill or anyone who lives alone.

Donate to a food kitchen.

Help those in need financially.

## **REDUCE YOUR WORRY AT NIGHT**

Meditate

Read something fun

Take a bath or shower

Turn off TV to get a good night sleep

## **USE THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRY SOMETHING NEW**

Practice a musical instrument

Learn new hobbies (use YouTube)

Cook new recipes

Contact friends you have lost contact with

Keep a gratitude journal

Organize photos

Learn to meditate using an app (ex. Calm, 10% Happier or Head Space)

Practice deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation exercises (there are apps for these too!)

## **LOOK AT THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH**

Remember Americans are resilient.

Crisis can bring out the best in people.

Think about how you can help your community.

This virus is universal. No matter what your race, religion or politics we need to help each other during this time.

### **FOR SEVERE ANXIETY**

If your anxiety is severe and interfering with your functioning, reach out to your doctor or a mental health professional such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or mental health counselor.

There are tele-psychiatry and psychology services available. Help is available!

**REMEMBER: ONE DAY THIS WILL BE HISTORY!**