



Coping During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond during a time of crisis can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in. The recent outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in both adults and children. It is important to pay attention to how you and your family members are feeling and acting. Following the tips below to help take care of your emotional health and to support those that you care about.

Recognize the Signs of Distress

Short-term stress can boost your immune system and make you more equipped to respond to or overcome challenges. However, prolonged anxiety and stress can interfere with both your physical and emotional health. Being able to recognize the warning signs of distress can help you understand when you or your loved one needs additional help. Some common signs or symptoms of emotional distress include:

- Feelings of shock or disbelief
- Difficultly concentrating
- Disrupted sleep, nightmares, restlessness
- Feelings of helplessness
- Social withdrawal
- Headaches, physical tension or pain
- Changes in appetite
- Feeling anxious, fearful, angry, or sad
- Chronic health problems get worse
- Increased use of alcohol or other drugs

Taking Care of Yourself

When stress strikes, self-care often takes a backseat. You may notice that your focus is on everyone else's needs, your never-ending to-do list, or worrying about the future. And yet, it's during difficult times when we need to care for ourselves the most. Follow these tips to take steps towards implementing self-care:

Get back to the basics. Self-care is essential during times of crisis. Try to eat healthy, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. Be sure not to turn to negative coping strategies like alcohol or drugs.

Stay connected. Taking care of your body is important, but tending to your relationships is a form of self-care too. It is important to share your thoughts and feelings with a friend or family member. Maintaining and utilizing your support system can improve your mood and reduce your stress. So make a point of reaching out even if just by phone.

Take a break. Take time to unwind and focus on the positive things in your life. Spend time doing something that you truly enjoy. Practice mindfulness, the act of paying attention on purpose in the present moment. Being able to clear your mind of negative thoughts or worries is necessary during stressful moments.

Ask for help. Individuals who feel an overwhelming sense of worry or anxiety can seek professional help. If you or a loved one needs additional support MHC is available to provide confidential assistance.

Need further assistance? Call MHC 1.800.255.3081