

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF DURING STRESSFUL TIMES

COVID-19 has been scary and stressful for a lot of people. It is normal to feel anxious, confused and frightened during a pandemic. You might notice that you are feeling on edge, irritable, unable to relax, or angry for no real reason. Maybe you feel unfocused or unable to concentrate. These are all normal reactions to stress.

It's important to take care of yourself during stressful times. Stress affects everyone differently and people have different ways to reduce their stress. Self-care is not always easy and sometimes it might feel like work, but it is worth it. Below are some activities that you might want to try.

GENERAL TIPS

- Remember that stress is normal and it affects people differently. Remember too that COVID-19 will pass.
- Remember that you are not alone. Others are feeling the same way. It can help to talk to someone how you're feeling.
- Try to remain positive: Engage in positive self-talk and be compassionate with yourself. Many of us are kind to others but forget to be kind to themselves! Try being your own best friend.
- Focus on things you can control like the way you talk to yourself and others and taking care of yourself.
- Try to do something you usually enjoy like a hobby, listening to music or reading a book. Even if it doesn't feel like fun right now, it can take your mind off work or other stressors.
- Watch what you eat and try to get exercise, even if it is only short walks.
- Find quick, simple activities that help you feel calm. Try some of the ideas below.

RELAXATION ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO IN 30 SECONDS

- Take a few slow deep breaths. Breathe in, count to 3, breathe out, count to 3.
- Sit on a chair and feel the sensation of the chair pressing into your back and your bottom.
- Drink a cup of cold water. Feel the cooling effect of each sip. Observe the bubbles in the water or the way the water moves in the cup.
- Learn a favourite, inspiring quote by heart, or keep a written version handy to read.
- Close your eyes and imagine a happy memory or a calming place such as a beach, a forest, etc.
- Look out the window or doorway. What can you see or hear? Notice anything different?

OTHER WAYS YOU CAN RELAX IN THE MOMENT

Deep Breathing:

Take a slow breath in through your nose for about 4 seconds, try breathing into your belly. Hold your breath for 1-2 seconds. Breathe out through your mouth, for about 4 seconds. Wait a few seconds before taking another breath. Repeat 6-8 times. The times between breathes vary – do what is comfortable to you.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation:

Tense a muscle group for 5-10 seconds and quickly release the muscles. Repeat with a different muscle group. Gradually move from muscles in legs to face. Notice the difference in how your body feels.

5-4-3-2-1:

Name 5 things you can see. Name 4 things you can touch. Name 3 things you can hear. Name 2 things you can smell. Name 1 thing you are grateful for.

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Safe Care BC

Workshops, information sheets, self-help and assessment tools, outreach and peer programs

CAREFORCAREGIVERS

Mental health support for health care providers

Care for Caregivers

Specialized information on mental health topics, events, webinars, peer support



Canadian Mental Health Association
Mental health for all

Canadian Mental Health Association

Information on mental health support including counselling, peer support, online courses

For questions and additional support, please contact the **PHSA Mobile Response Team (MRT)** at +1 888 686 3022 or e-mail: mrt@phsa.ca