



Mental Health & Wellbeing

The spread of coronavirus is a new and challenging event. Some people might find it more worrying than others. Try to remember that medical, scientific and public health experts are working hard to contain the virus and develop a vaccine.

You may relate to some of the following:

- increased anxiety.
- feeling stressed.
- finding yourself excessively checking for symptoms, in yourself, or others.
- becoming irritable more easily.
- feeling insecure or unsettled.
- fearing that normal aches and pains might be the virus.
- having trouble sleeping.
- feeling helpless or a lack of control.
- having irrational thoughts.

Keeping a realistic perspective of the situation based on facts is important. Here are some ways you can do this:

Stay informed but set limits for news and social media

The constant stream of social media updates and news reports about coronavirus could cause you to feel worried. Sometimes it can be difficult to separate facts from rumours. Use trustworthy and reliable sources to get your news. Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.

Try to anticipate distress and support each other

It is understandable to feel vulnerable or overwhelmed reading or hearing news about the outbreak. Acknowledge these feelings. Remind yourself and others to look after your physical and mental health. If you smoke or drink, try to avoid doing this any more than usual. It won't help in the long-term.

Don't make assumptions

Don't judge people or make assumptions about who is responsible for the spread of the disease. The coronavirus can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, nationality or ethnicity. We are all in this together.

Stay connected to others

During times of stress, friends and families can be a good source of support. It is important to keep in touch with them and other people in your life.

If you need to restrict your movements or self-isolate, try to stay connected to people in other ways, for example:

- e-mail.
- social media.
- video calls.
- phone calls.
- text messages

Many video calling apps allow you to have video calls with multiple people at the same time.

Remember that talking things through with someone can help lessen worry or anxiety. You don't have to appear to be strong or to try to cope with things by yourself.

Online and phone supports

Face-to-face services are limited at the moment. But some services are providing online and phone services. There are also many dedicated online services that can help.

Keep up your healthy routines

Your routine may be affected by the coronavirus outbreak in different ways. But during difficult times like this, it's best if you can keep some structure in your day.

It's important to pay attention to your needs and feelings, especially during times of stress. You may still be able to do some of the things you enjoy and find relaxing.

Ways to achieve better wellbeing:

- Talking – being open with people you trust about how you are feeling.
- Exercising – looking after your body and eating healthy.
- Calming – trying meditation, good sleep habits i.e. turning your phone off early.
- Learning – a new skill is a great way to gain confidence.
- Relating – spending time with the people you care about in your household or by phone.
- Contributing – helping others or contributing to causes you believe in.
- Creating – expressing yourself creatively e.g. music, art, drama, writing.
- Congratulating – being kind to yourself, or listing the qualities you value in yourself.

Focus on what you can control; your behavior, hand washing, respiratory hygiene & social distancing

You do not have to be an expert to support someone with a mental health issue!

- Continue to be friendly.
- Ask them how they are and what support they need.
- Remember their strengths as well as their problems.
- One kind act / word can make a big difference.
- Make a stand against stigma and discrimination.

Talking about mental health issues is NOT a sign of weakness. It takes strength & courage.

Stay Safe. Stay Connected.