

Better Mental Health During COVID-19



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Work Life Harmony

Decide when you are “on” and when you are “off.” If possible, have a flexible schedule so that you can manage other issues in your household – such as starting children on their distance learning – and not feel as stressed.

Healthy Coping Strategies

Find ways to help cope with stress. Some people meditate, practice yoga, listen to music, take a power nap, or do a puzzle. Identify what helps you.

Breathe

There are lots of breathing exercises out there to help slow down your mind and heart rate. Most have components that include breathing slowly, and where the count is longer when exhaling than inhaling.

Move

Move in some way 30 to 60 minutes a day. It does not matter what you do – run, walk, dance, bike, etc. Moving releases the endorphins – your “feel good” neurotransmitters - in your brain.

Nutrition

Healthy eating helps you feel better. Limit junk food and comfort food. Eat more vegetables and fruits. Drink more water and avoid alcohol.

Sleep

Sleep is essential for good mental health. If you are having trouble sleeping make sure your room is dark, go to bed at the same time every night, keep the room cool and keep technology out of the bedroom.

Control What You Can

Be in charge of your time. Limit exposure to negative things – such as the news. Take the steps needed to keep you and your family safe such as wearing (and washing) masks, washing your hands, cleaning surfaces, keeping physically distant.

Create a Routine

Create a sense of normalcy by having a schedule for the day for you and your household. Have set times for breakfast, work, studying, exercise, etc.

Journaling

It helps to write things down – your fears, what you are grateful for, etc. It clears your mind and connects you to living your life with purpose.

Positivity

Try to focus on positive things. Put photos in your phone that make you smile (cute kittens). Think of three things for which you are grateful before you get out of bed. Watch funny movies, read a good book, do things that make you smile.

Volunteer or Give Back

While it's hard to volunteer during a pandemic, you can make masks, help with food drives, give blood, or write nice notes to people in nursing homes or residential facilities and to people you know who are lonely.

Focus on Today

We cannot predict what is going to happen in the future. Focus on yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Time Management

Do a "brain dump." Write down all the things you need to do at home and at work. Circle the top three to four things and focus on those during the day. Being able to cross things off your list gives you a sense of accomplishment.

Technology Boundaries

Take a break for them – over dinner, while watching TV and definitely at least an hour before you go to bed.

Find Your Quiet Place

Set aside time and a space where you can focus and relax. It might mean locking yourself in the bathroom for ten minutes and telling your children not to disturb you unless there is a fire. It might mean taking a walk outside.

Faith, Spirituality, and Culture

All of these helps you feel connected to something outside of yourself. Faith communities helps you connect to others. Embracing our culture, cultural traditions, and healing practices, creates a sense of belonging.

Stay Connected to Others

Connect with friends and families regularly by texting, calling, and using Facetime or Zoom. Try to do an activity together such as taking a walk while talking on the phone, playing games together, eating a meal together while using Facetime.

Grieve

We are grieving for the loss of life events – graduations, weddings, funerals. It is ok to be sad about missing them.

Ban Perfectionism

Now is not the time to be perfect. Do the best that you can.

Guilt

Guilt is a normal reaction right now – guilty that we are not sick, that we have a job, that we yelled at a loved one. Apologize when appropriate, try not to dwell on it, change your negative self-talk.

Compassion

We are not at our best during a crisis. Do not expect that of yourself or of others. Give people the benefit of the doubt, think the best of them. Give people (and yourself) grace and space.

Worried about yourself or others? Suicide Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 or text MN to 741-741