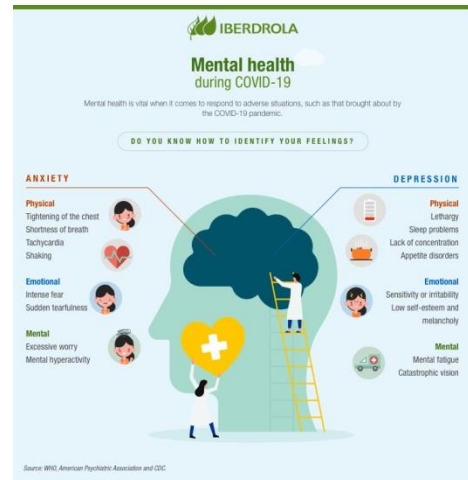


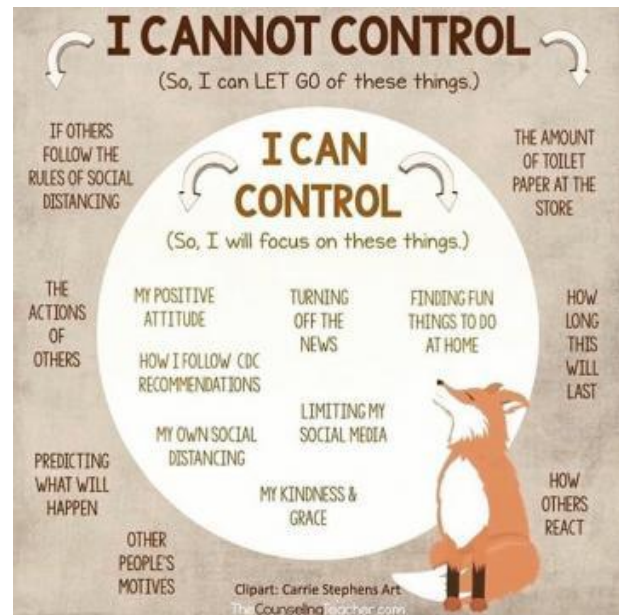
Healthy Ways to Cope Up with Stress during the outbreak of COVID Pandemic

- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including those on social media.** It's good to be informed, but hearing about the pandemic constantly can be upsetting. Consider limiting news to just a couple times a day and disconnecting from phone, tv, and computer screens for a while.
- **Take care of your body.**
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
 - Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
 - Exercise regularly.
 - Get plenty of sleep.
 - Avoid excessive alcohol, tobacco, and substance use.
 - Continue with routine preventive measures (such as vaccinations, cancer screenings, etc.) as recommended by your healthcare provider.
 - Get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when available.
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- **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- **Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations.** While social distancing measures are in place, try connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.



Points to Remember while coping with stress

- It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis. Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.
- If you must stay at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle - including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contacts with loved ones at home and by email and phone with other family and friends
- Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions. If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor. Have a plan, where to go to and how to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.
- Get the facts. Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as WHO website or, a local or state public health agency
- Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.
- Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you to manage previous life's adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak



Cognitive and somatic coping

Reducing stress arousal through breath practices

- Practices that manage stress reactions in the moment are critical, particularly for front line providers.
- Taking time out during the day, frequently, to self regulate, can be very helpful. Find a breathing technique that works for calming you.
- The most basic thing to know is that taking a longer exhale than inhale can help calm your body. Easy techniques include slow diaphragmatic belly breathing (vs. chest breathing), a 2:1 ratio for the exhale (i.e., inhale to the count of 4, exhale to the count of 8); 4-7-8 count breathing, and a common yogic alternate nostril breathing (pranayama).



Maintaining good sleep

Before going to bed, it is important to unplug and ready yourself for a restful night. The first thing to do is to say goodbye to all COVID-19-related news. We suggest:

- 1-2 hours prior to bed, unplug from email, news, and anything else that creates a busy mind and begin focusing on creating a calm, relaxing environment. Say goodbye to COVID news; trust that it will be there in the morning.
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- Turn down the lights and do things that are relaxing. Relaxing activities vary by person, but often include reading, listening to music, or a meditation audio.
- Avoid alcohol close to bedtime and discontinue caffeine after noon.

- Keep a regular sleep schedule
- Maintain a regular wake up time. If possible, also try to get some direct sunlight in the morning. Together, these will help regulate your circadian rhythm.
- Don't toss and turn in bed
- If you are unable to fall asleep or wake up and can't fall back to sleep, don't toss and turn in bed for longer than 15-20 minutes. Get out of bed and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy and then go back to bed.
- Make your bedroom a shrine to sleep
- Be sure to keep your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool.
- Mind your day to protect your night
- What you do during the day can have a big effect on your night. Working from home affords convenience, but also may lead to more sedentary behavior and napping. Napping can eat away at your sleep drive, making it harder to fall asleep at night. Inactivity can similarly lead to lighter sleep and less feelings of restoration in the morning after a night of slumber.

Maintaining physical activity

- Find ways to exercise.
- More than ever before we know that our physical health affects our mental health, and exercise can reduce stress reactivity and even ameliorate moderate depression.
- Although it may be tough to exercise indoors, engaging in regular physical activity will help reduce your anxiety and stress.



What to expect when experiencing loss and grief during the COVID-19 crisis

- The pandemic has caused loss of everything we are familiar with, including our daily structure, for some jobs, and social contacts. It had led to serious financial despair, illness, and death.
- There are thus a range of emotional responses including grief, loss, and mourning
- The grief period after a loss can be lightened, but not eliminated. Each individual's personal experiences differ, even in the same household.
- Each person must negotiate their own darkened passage with the help of their community supports.
- For a time after a loss, you may experience feelings of apathy, insomnia, poor or increased appetite, anxiety, irritability and weight loss or gain.
- These symptoms are often associated with feeling deeply sad and having severe worries. But do not be surprised if there is a stage of feeling numb and a bit unreal or not yourself.
- There are stages of reaction and not all affected parties to a loss of loved one go through the phases at the same time.
- Take pride in taking care of yourself and others. Pay attention to feelings and keep up with social activities as much as you can.
- If you have suicidal impulses or cannot function, you are probably suffering from a complicated grief reaction and/or a clinical depression, and you should promptly seek professional help.

