

Recognize and Manage Stress

Know the signs of stress

Thoughts: Being easily distracted, trouble with concentration, trouble remembering

Emotions: Trouble relaxing, feeling irritable, feeling down, feeling anxious

Body: Increase or decrease of energy, body tension, feeling restless, sweating, being easily startled, having headaches, changes in appetite, difficulty sleeping

Behavior: Wanting to be alone, trouble completing works tasks, blaming others, getting into arguments

Stay connected

Epidemics restrict access to social support structures such as schools, workplaces and places of worship, and even restrict spending time with friends and family. Be creative about how to maintain connections with others during this time. Talking to those you trust is a helpful way to reduce feelings of isolation, anxiety, fear, boredom or vulnerability during times of physical or social distance or quarantine.

- Seek support from family, friends, mentors and spiritual or religious leaders.
- Be flexible and creative in accessing support via phone, email, text messaging and video calls.
- Talk about your experiences and feelings with loved ones and friends, if you find it helpful.
- Write about your experiences and share them with others through social media and other outlets.

Ways to manage stress

- Realize that it is understandable to feel anxious and worried about what may happen, especially when many aspects of life are uncertain or have changed.
- Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings are tolerable and will fade. Accept, instead of suppressing emotions, and “ride the wave” of strong feelings by observing how they show up in your body without judgment.
- If you find that you are getting stressed by watching the news, reduce your exposure, particularly prior to sleep.
- Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do something fun after a hard task.
- Relax your body and mind: practice slow, steady breathing and muscle relaxation, as well as any other soothing actions (meditation, yoga, exercise, walking, music, reading for pleasure).
- Maintain a sense of hope; consider keeping a journal where you write down things you are grateful for or that are going well.
- Engage in and savor pleasant activities (search online for lists of pleasant activities to do at home).