

SEVEN WAYS TO COPE WITH STRESS

During These Difficult Times

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

It can be emotionally stressful when things in our external environment feel out of our control. Instead, shift your focus to what you can have more control over: your internal environment (e.g., thoughts, feelings, healthy living habits). You may find that you feel better and you will have a lower need for external control.

RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

Some problems can't be solved and it can be difficult to accept things that are painful or unfair. It's okay to experience feelings of disappointment, sadness, and loss that are part of life. Radical acceptance is about accepting life as it is, rather than how we wish it to be.

RE-FRAMING UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

During difficult times it can be especially easy to fall into unhelpful thinking patterns such as "I'm stuck at home", which can lead to negative emotions that can be difficult to manage. Instead shift some of those unhelpful thoughts to "I get to be safe in my home and spend time with my family/roommate/pet." If we shift our thoughts to be more helpful this will help us make it through these difficult times, as well as recover and grow.

SELF-COMPASSION

Self-compassion is when we extend kindness to ourselves even when we experience failures, low productivity and feelings of inadequacy. We tend to be harder on ourselves than others when we go through difficult times. It is important that we exercise self-compassion as this helps to reduce our own suffering and make it easier to overcome hardships.

MAINTAIN SOCIAL CONNECTION

A sense of belonging is a basic human need as we tend to feel safe and can deal with intense emotions such as loneliness and sadness, when we feel positive social support. Social distancing isn't social isolation. Now is the time to be creative with how we connect with one another, as this can help all of us flourish together.

ESTABLISH ROUTINES- SLEEP/NUTRITION/MOVEMENT

When experiencing increased levels of stress or anxiety, it's important to keep up healthy routines. Create a daily schedule that includes healthy sleep patterns (not under or over sleeping, a routine of going to bed and waking up at the same time daily), eating regular and healthy meals and snacks, and moving at least once a day.

TAKING THINGS ONE DAY AND ONE STEP AT A TIME

When experiencing a crisis, it can be helpful to focus on the present moment and take things one day, or even one small step at a time. Practice turning your attention on what is in front of you in that given moment, and try to have peace with that. For example, when taking a shower enjoy the feel of water on your back, and let go of other thoughts.

FIFTEEN WAYS TO FLOURISH

During These Difficult Times

1. Limit exposure to media and allow yourself daily distractions that contribute to your well-being.
2. At least once a day call, text, or video chat with at least one friend or loved one.
3. Start a gratitude journal. Write three things you are grateful for each day.
4. While maintaining social distancing, take a mindful walk and observe the flowers in bloom for Spring.
5. Try a new recipe or cook your favorite meal.
6. Start a daily meditation practice.
7. Listen to your favorite music, attend a free concert online.
8. Use this time to find something new that you can get engaged in. For example, learn a new language, engage in a new artistic activity, or try a new online exercise class.
9. Read that book you've been meaning to get to.
10. Organize a group video chat (coffee break or dinner), or sync up a movie to watch together and share your reactions.
11. Look for online volunteer opportunities. For example, join a virtual "phone bank" to call seniors in your community who live alone.
12. Be more deliberate in your social media participation - instead of just liking someone's social media post, take an extra moment to send them a wish that they are doing well.
13. Do an anonymous act of kindness for someone you know.
14. Do things that we usually don't have time for - like cleaning out a drawer or your closet.
15. You are also allowed to take this time and decompress - to find balance. You can set a goal to not set a goal - to "reset" - to sit and do nothing. For some of us perhaps that will be a great accomplishment!