10 Ways to Cope with Anxiety about Coronavirus (COVID-19)

It's normal to feel stressed, sad, confused, scared or angry in a time of uncertainty and unpredictability. If you've noticed an increase in anxiety, be kind to yourself—you are not alone!

Here are some things you can do to help yourself cope with anxiety related to the Coronavirus:

1. Practice noticing and allowing anxiety:

"What you resist persists" (Carl Jung). Resisting anxiety rarely works. Instead, try letting anxious thoughts, sensations, feelings ebb and flow, notice the ebb and flow, and then focus back in the present moment. Ground yourself with your feet on the floor and try tip 7!

2. Stay connected:

Feeling isolated at a time of uncertainty can add to feelings of stress. Find ways to stay in touch with friends and loved ones and communicate about how you are feeling.

3. Limit exposure to coronavirus news:

Unplug! Set boundaries around how often and for how long you connect with news about the virus—consider checking the news once a day or for 30 minutes. Continually reading the news keeps the stress of the uncertainty at the forefront of your mind, increasing feelings of anxiety.

4. Decrease conversations about coronavirus:

Talking more about the virus with others can increase stress. Consider not initiating conversations with friends/family about the virus, change the topic when it comes up, and let others know you do not want updates.

5. Practice good self-care:

Wellness steps are particularly important at times of stress. Prioritize sleep, eat well, stretch, and pursue leisure activities.

6. Connect with purpose and meaning:

Reminding ourselves of the "why" of life can help us cope with anxiety. This may involve connecting to spirituality or faith, supporting others, or something else entirely.

7. Practice relaxation:

You can't be anxious and relaxed at the same time. Take a few minutes and try some calm breathing or progressive muscle relaxation. Here's a link to some relaxation practices: www.anxietycanada.com, Keyword search: Audio.

8. Connect with self-compassion:

Struggling with anxious feelings makes sense during a time of uncertainty, and this may feel more difficult if you have pre-existing anxiety. Being kind to ourselves and remembering that we are not alone in the worries can help ease anxiety.

9. Focus on what you can influence:

When we only focus on what is beyond our control, anxiety can feel worse. Instead, shift your attention to the steps you can take to help respond to the virus, including practicing good hand hygiene, refraining from touching your face, and staying home if you feel unwell. Take a deep breath and keep things in perspective.

10. Draw on your skills:

You have coped with stressful situations in the past. Try to remind yourself of the helpful and supportive ways you coped with other stressors at other times in your life.

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