# Tips for Managing Anxiety During COVID-19

Anxiety; a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, is a normal human response during these uncertain times. From struggling to feel safe, to experiencing financial constraints, this pandemic has threatened our most basic needs. There are several things you can do to manage anxiety:

- **Be easy on yourself**- understand that in times of high stress, we are overtaxed and may not function at our best. That is okay!
- **Focus on the things you can control**- you may not be able to develop a vaccine for the virus, but you can certainly implement a few of the suggestions from this list!
- **Limit the amount of news you take in**- while it is good to stay informed, studies show us that too much news has a negative effect on our mental health (https://www.nextavenue.org/too-much-news/). Limit yourself to checking the news once or twice a day.
- **Stay connected with key people outside your home**- be intentional about investing in relationships with friends and family through phone calls, texts and video chatting. Make it a goal to have a conversation with at least one person per day.
- **Get active**- if you are not already exercising, start building movement into your daily routine. Physical exercise is known to have wonderful positive effects on mental health. If you don't know where to start, just google "free exercise videos, or try yoga! Again, there are many great options available by googling "best free yoga videos."
- **Practice gratitude**- it is difficult to be worried or anxious when your thoughts are focused on the things you are thankful for. A simple way to do this is to start or end each day by writing down five specific things you are grateful for from the day.
- **Use calming techniques**- when you are really struggling, interrupt your anxious thoughts by noticing 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you and feel, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste. Utilize one of the many apps that have been developed for this purpose, such as CALM.
- **Be mindful**- when you are washing your hands, don't just sing happy birthday or the A-B-Cs, try memorizing and reciting an encouraging mantra or prayer. Try meditation or breathing exercises. Here again, google and YouTube are your friends!
- **Build joy into your day**- make a list of all the things you can do during quarantine that you enjoy and make sure you take the time each day to do a few of them. Play a game with the kids, bake some muffins, take a walk, read, watch a favorite TV show, take a nap, do an art or home improvement project. Take advantage of this time at home.
- **Help someone else**- what can you do to make someone else's day better?

Tips for helping your children with their anxiety-

- **Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak**. This is best done naturally, like around the dinner table or when the subject 'comes up.'
- **Answer their questions.** Often times, kind wonder about things we would never guess unless they tell us.

- **Reassure your child or teen** that they are safe. Acknowledge their feelings and let them know it is perfectly ok and normal to feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- **Limit your family's exposure to news coverage** of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- **Create a COVID routine**. Kids thrive on routine and chances are this pandemic as thrown that all off. So, it's up to you to create a new daily schedule.
- **Be a role model.** Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well.