

Coronavirus

Accepting Our Current Reality

Many of us feel anxiety in response to the uncertainty of COVID-19, sadness related to losing our daily routines, and anger at whatever forces are to blame. It's normal to be unsettled about the upending of life as we know it. Many parents of younger children are facing the stress of taking care of them at home, often while teleworking themselves. And families with elderly or sick relatives are dealing with even stricter isolation in an attempt to prevent COVID-19 in this vulnerable population.

No one knows how long the pandemic will last or when we can resume our regular lives. Even worse, many people are worried that they may be laid off and lose their livelihoods. The pervasive uncertainty makes it hard to plan a course of action and creates higher levels of stress. To add insult to injury, our typical ways of de-stressing, such as working out in a gym, watching sports, happy hours with co-workers or hanging out with groups of friends, have largely come to a halt.

The following information may help you respond to the pandemic in a healthy way:

Practice mindfulness: A lot of anxious thoughts and emotions will show up during this time. It's important to accept them rather than try to push them away or escape them. Notice negative emotions, thoughts and physical sensations as they come up, look into them with curiosity, describe them without judgment and then let them go.

Create new routines: Planning and executing new routines that connect you to what really matters in life is the best recipe for good mental health. It's important to establish structure, predictability and a sense of purpose with these new routines.

Focus on self-care: Exercise, good nutrition and socializing are directly linked to emotional well-being, so now is the time to get creative. New self-care routines will give you mental strength.

Stay positive: Trying times offer several avenues for psychological growth and an opportunity to deepen our relationships. Keep in mind that stress and negative emotions can have positive consequences. Sometimes people who go through difficult life experiences can emerge with resilience and a renewed appreciation of life.

As always, your EAP is here for you and your family. Whether you are staying home or continuing your routine, there are a variety of ways to connect with your EAP including: telephone 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7341, online at EAP4YOU.com, through video, live chat or text message. Reach out to learn more ways you can receive support from your EAP.

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. For the latest information visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

This information was adapted from an article by Jelena Kecmanovic for The Washington Post