GETTING THROUGH CORONAVIRUS

ONE BREATH AT A TIME

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It is a well-established medical fact that when we are stressed, the immune system’s ability to fight off antigens is reduced. The stress hormone can suppress the effectiveness of the immune system.

In the midst of the Coronavirus epidemic, we might also experience the epidemic fear or “Coronavirus Panic”. The epidemic naturally brings upon a tremendous amount of stress, anxiety and fear for those directly and indirectly affected.

Our body is stressed on a minute by minute basis with constant and overwhelming social media reports of a life-threatening diseases. It is essential to keep your stress levels at a minimum because there is only so much you can do.
In the days and weeks following the Coronavirus situation, you may begin to experience some common stress response.

**Common Stress Response**

- Disbelief and shock
- Fear and anxiety about the future and death
- Disorientation; difficulty making decisions or concentrating
- Apathy and emotional numbing
- Nightmares and reoccurring thoughts about the epidemic
- Irritability and anger
- Sadness and feeling powerless
- Changes in eating patterns; loss of appetite or overeating
- Crying for “no apparent reason”
- Headaches, back pains and stomach problems
- Difficulty sleeping or falling asleep
How to Cope

• Take good care of yourself physically and emotionally
  ○ Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of water, eat healthy and balanced meals.
  ○ If you smoke or drink coffee, try to limit your intake as nicotine and caffeine can also add to your stress.
  ○ Cultivate self-compassion and be kind to yourself for the challenges that you are going through.
• Limit exposure to news or social media on Coronavirus.
  ○ Set a time limit (e.g., an hour per day) on watching or reading only trustworthy and reliable news or talking about Coronavirus. Watching or reading news about the event over and over again will only increase your stress.
• Talk about it (in moderation)
  ○ By talking with others about the event, you can relieve stress and realize that others share your feelings.
  ○ You are not alone. We are all in this Coronavirus situation together. We can get through this together as the DKU community.
How to Cope

- Avoid drugs and excessive drinking or emotional eating. Drugs, alcohol and emotional eating may temporarily seem to remove stress, but in the long run they generally create additional problems that compound the stress you were already feeling.

- Structure your day and find some indoor activities you enjoy. Balance mind/body, fun and learning activities to keep your brain and body stimulated.
  - Read a book
  - Establish a daily meditation routine (minimum 15 minutes/day)
  - Yoga
  - Watch a movie
  - Listen to or play music
  - Drawing
  - Do a 30-minute At-Home online video fitness class
  - Play a video game
  - Learn a new language
How to Cope

• Take an online class
  ◦ Learn something new that has always been in your bucket list but you never had the time for it before. Now is the perfect timing!

• Structure your day, one thing at a time
  ◦ Make a To-Do list by breaking down your day into morning, afternoon and evening activities just like when you are in school.
  ◦ Once you accomplish that task, choose the next one. “Checking off” tasks will give you a sense of accomplishment, control and mastery. It makes things feel less overwhelming.

• Do something positive and meaningful. Helping other people can give you a sense of purpose in a situation that feels “out of your control.”

• Do anything else you find enjoyable. These healthy activities can help you get your mind off the epidemic and keep the stress in check.

• Stay hopeful and optimistic
  ◦ Nothing is permanent. Everything will pass including the Coronavirus epidemic.
  ◦ One moment at a time. One breath at a time.