MANAGING ANXIETY *WHILE IN QUARANTINE*

A global pandemic is a stressful event for everyone and may leave you feeling unbalanced. Even if you do not normally feel anxious, you may be experiencing anxiety due to the current situation, and that's OK. It is completely normal to be worried right now. Below are some tips to help you manage your anxiety about COVID-19.

Be kind to yourself and others. Everyone reacts differently. There is no "right way" to feel about what is happening. Allow yourself to feel what you feel and find healthy ways to manage negative feelings. You are not alone in feeling more anxiety than normal. Keep this in mind when interacting with friends and family, including those who are quarantined with you and those you are contacting virtually. Perhaps, be quicker to forgive if tensions run high.

Communicate your feelings with others. Your friends and family can likely relate to the anxiety you may be feeling. Talk with them about your feelings when you are ready. You don't have to talk before you are ready. It can be nice to catch up with friends and talk about other topics. Video-conferencing apps make it easy for you to see and talk to your friends. You can have a virtual party or play games together.

Focus on the things that you can do. Possibly one of the most stressful things about this pandemic is that everyone is being asked to stay home and do nothing. For those who used to be constantly on the go, this can be frustrating and a source of great anxiety. Without something to do, many are left feeling helpless. Try to remember there are things that you can do. Staying home as much as possible is the greatest action you can take to protect yourself (and others) against the virus. You can make sure you and your family are washing your hands frequently and thoroughly, at least 20 seconds each time.

Helping others can make you feel better. If you have the means, you can donate money to relief funds and food banks. One of the easiest things you can do is to express your gratitude to essential workers. Be kind to grocery store workers when you do go out. They are busier than ever at this time, and nice words and a simple thank you can go a long way. If you have kids, a fun project could be creating signs for the front yard saying thank you to any health care workers, mail workers, or sanitation workers that might drive by your yard.

Reach out for help when you need it. There is nothing wrong with needing help. There are crisis lines that you can call if you need to talk to someone immediately. Many mental health workers have started offering telehealth services. You can set up a video appointment and never have to leave your home to talk to someone. Your employee assistance program (EAP) is a good place to start.

Routines can be comforting. Develop a new routine for yourself. The closer you keep this routine to your usual daily routine, the more you create a sense of normalcy. If you keep your regular hours, going to sleep and getting up at your normal times, it will be much easier to transition back to working in the office when quarantine ends.

Try to reframe the way you are thinking about staying home. Positive thinking can be an excellent coping tool. Try to find the positives in your situation. Look at this as an opportunity to spend more time with your family, or to work on those projects you have always wanted to do around the house.

Make sure that you are taking care of yourself. Don't let personal hygiene and your health fall to the wayside during this time. Don't forget to eat or hydrate. Regular healthy meals and plenty of water can go a long way to making you feel better. Take a shower each day. It will make you feel better to be clean. Find ways to workout at home; virtual classes are a great way to do this. Finally, make sure you are getting plenty of sleep. Rest is important for your immune system and overall wellbeing.