

## MIND MATTERS

**Guidelines for the Mind in combating COVID-19 healthy outcomes.** This Fact Sheet will look at why mind matters.

**Taking care of your mental health during COVID-19:** Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. Mental health is an important part of overall health and wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It may also affect how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices during an emergency.

### **Why our mind matters**

Our mind matters and keeping our mind active is important. We all need to think about our mind in the same way that we need to think about our bodies, especially in times of change.

Where possible, try to keep up with normal everyday activities and interests, especially keeping in touch with friends, family and neighbours. Keeping active with interests and hobbies we enjoy keeps our mind well. Trying something new can be a great thing to do.

There may be times when things change for us, so knowing what to do if something does change will help us cope better. It is important to stay connected and remember others are likely feeling similar so sharing and being kind will help. For most of us, these feelings will pass. Finding joy each day can really help, such as noticing the things we appreciate like blossom or flowers, a call from a friend or family member, a good cup of tea, completing a word search, baking, taking in some fresh air, watching a sunset.

How you respond to stress during the COVID-19 pandemic can depend on your background, your social support from family or friends, your financial situation, your health and emotional background, the community you live in, and many other factors. The changes that can happen because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ways we try to contain the spread of the virus can affect anyone.

### **People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include:**

- People who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (for example, older

people, and people of any age with certain underlying medical conditions).

- Children and teens.
- People caring for family members or loved ones.
- Frontline workers such as health care providers and first responders,
- Essential workers who work in the food industry.
- People who have existing mental health conditions.
- People who use substances or have a substance use disorder.
- People who have lost their jobs, had their work hours reduced, or had other major changes to their employment.
- People who have disabilities or developmental delay.
- People who are socially isolated from others, including people who live alone, and people in rural or frontier areas.
- People in some racial and ethnic minority groups.
- People who do not have access to information in their primary language.
- People experiencing homelessness.
- People who live in congregate (group) settings.

### **Taking care of yourself and your community during COVID-19**

Taking care of your friends and your family can be a stress reliever, but it should be balanced with care for yourself. Helping others cope with their stress, such as by providing social support, can also

make your community stronger. During times of increased social distancing, people can still maintain social connections and care for their mental health. Phone calls or video chats can help you and your loved ones feel socially connected, less lonely, or isolated.

### **What do to cope up with stress**

**Know what to do if you are sick and are concerned about COVID-19.** Contact a health professional before you start any self-treatment for COVID-19.

**Know where and how to get treatment** and other support services and resources, including counselling or therapy (in person or through tele-health services).

**Take care of your emotional health.** Taking care of your emotional health will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family.

**Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories,** including those on social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.

### **Take care of your body.**

- Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate external icon.
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid excessive alcohol and drug use.

**Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.

**Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

**Connect with your community- or faith-based organizations.** While social distancing measures are in place, consider connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.

- Stay in touch with friends, family, neighbours, clubs, and your community by phone.
- Asking for help with shopping and running errands.
- Volunteer to get or become a phone befriender to others
- Plan practical things
- Keep up with usual everyday activities and interests at home.
- Make a 'to do list' for each day: writing shopping lists, making calls, order repeat prescriptions.
- Continue accessing treatment and support for health conditions from your GP.

### **Stay on top of difficult feelings and worries**

- Try to focus on things in your control.
- Limit how much news you watch or listen to and use trusted sources (BBC/ITV).
- Take time to chat about how you're feeling with others, it can really help.

### **Take time to notice and feel joy**

- Take time to focus on activities you enjoy at home.
- Set yourself a goal, learn a new skill, or take on a challenge.
- Take note of things that bring you joy and share with others.

### **If you start to feel overwhelmed, some simple breathing exercises can help:**

- Sit or lie down in a way that's comfortable for you.
- Take a deep breath in and hold it, at the same time raising and tightening your shoulders, and clenching your fists.
- Count slowly to five as you breathe out.
- Do this several times.

## **Ways to Reduce Stress Level During COVID-19**

### **Stay connected with others**



**City Bridge  
Trust**

