SUNY Cortland

Tips for Managing the Stress of Living with Covid-19

Psychological Tips for Managing Coronavirus Concerns

RECOGNIZING YOUR DISTRESS – A SELF-CHECKLIST

Are you experiencing any of the following?

- Increased anxiety, worry, fear, and feelings of being overwhelmed
- Depressive symptoms that persist and/or intensify
- Inability to focus or concentrate accompanied by decreased academic performance
- A feeling of hopelessness and/or paralyzing fear about the future
- Sudden anger and disruptive behaviors or noticeable changes in personality
- Sleep difficulties
- Excessive crying
- Isolating or withdrawing from others, fear of going into public situations
- Unhealthy coping (e.g., increased alcohol or drug use, engaging in risky/impulsive behaviors)

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH TIPS

Try the following to Improve Coping:

- **Acknowledge reactions.** Allow yourself time to reflect on what you are feeling and how you may be reacting to any fears and uncertainties of the future.

- **Stay virtually connected with others.** Try using phone calls, text messages, video chat, and social media to access social support networks. If you are feeling sad or anxious, use these conversations as an opportunity to discuss your experience and associated emotions. Reach out to those you know who are in a similar situation.

- **Create and follow a daily routine.** Maintaining a daily routine can help preserve a sense of order and purpose in one's life despite the unfamiliarity of the situation. Try to include regular daily activities, such as learning, working, listening to music, spending time being creative, and other healthy pastimes.

- **Limit news consumption to reliable sources.** It's important to obtain accurate and timely public health information regarding COVID-19, but too much exposure to media coverage can lead to increased feelings of fear and anxiety. Limit time spent on news and social media.

- **Pay attention to positive news instead of only focusing on negative and fear-producing reports.**

- **Practice grounding techniques and breathing exercises.** Remind yourself to breathe when you are feeling overwhelmed with anxiety and emotions. Try not to catastrophize and instead focus on what you can control. Consider keeping a daily gratitude journal or doing relaxation exercises like deep breathing, positive imagery, muscle relaxation, etc.

- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.** Prioritize getting a healthy amount of sleep, eating well, moving or exercising regularly, and avoiding alcohol and other recreational drugs. Sleep, nutrition, and exercise greatly affect the body's ability to regulate emotions.

- **Follow the protection and prevention tips** found on the COVID-19 web page on the SUNY Cortland website and national medical authorities.

AVOID STIGMATIZING OR GENERALIZING

- Be aware of your behavior or attitude change towards others from another country
- Avoid generalizing anyone who is sick as potentially having the Coronavirus
- Examine any irrational or rigid thoughts that can exist when there is uncertainty

You can also visit:

- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html