

Tips on how to care for yourself and manage your stress during the Covid-19 Pandemic

We are all currently experiencing the effects of the novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. It is important to remember that feeling anxious, fearful, stressed, angry or irritable are common and normal feelings during uncertain times like these. It can be helpful to understand some of the things that may be causing you to feel anxious and stressed. This includes when you read, hear or watch the news; go to the supermarket and see the empty shelves; can no longer engage in some of the activities that you love doing. You will notice many different reactions and responses from other people. We are all impacted in many ways and depending on your circumstances or perspective; you may experience different symptoms of stress.

Many of these are normal responses to what we are all experiencing with the uncertainty caused by the Coronavirus. It is important to monitor your own physical and mental health. Some signs of stress you may notice include:

- Heightened anxiety and/or fear
- Increased irritability and outbursts of anger and arguments
- Difficulty in sleeping and relaxing
- Worrying excessively
- Increase in use of alcohol or drugs
- Having difficulty in communicating or listening
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach pains
- Feeling depressed, guilty
- Denying feelings or saying you don't care
- Confused, difficulty making decisions

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, focus on looking after yourself. It is important you manage your stress so you can remain healthy and well. Here are some important self-care strategies you may find useful:

1. Focus on consistently implementing personal hygiene habits such as proper handwashing as this is a proven way to minimise your exposure to the virus.
2. Keep things in perspective, get the facts from reputable sources such as the World Health Organisation and Australian Government websites. Covid-19 has received unprecedented media coverage. While this can be helpful, it can also create anxiety. Consider minimising your exposure by limiting time spent online.
3. Identify what you can control by writing it down versus what is causing you concern but can't be controlled. Consider effective personal hygiene practices, washing your hands properly, social distancing or even offering to do the grocery shopping for your elderly neighbour.



4. Focus on the people around you, such as family, children, friends and colleagues. Keep in contact and connected.
5. Take breaks to enjoy some activities and be physical – go for a walk, garden, clean your house or practice yoga (remember you can still do these things even if you are self-isolating).
6. Eat healthy food and drink water regularly.
7. Make time to continue to do things that relax you – deep breathing, meditate, mindfulness, read, stretch, watch a movie, call a friend.
8. Talk about your feelings to loved ones and friends often – do not bottle up your anxieties as they won't go away.
9. Talk about other topics with friends, share enjoyable conversations.
10. Find ways to help others – helping others can help us feel like we can do something useful, which in turns helps with feelings of helplessness.

Useful websites:

[The World Health Organization](#)

[Commonwealth Department of Health](#)

[NSW Health Resources for Businesses](#)

Remember, as your EAP, we are here to support you whatever the nature of your concerns, please contact **AccessEAP** on **1800 818 728**.

