

# Techniques to manage COVID-19 stress and anxiety



During this time of fear and uncertainty, our first response is often to stress and worry — this is a natural response. Below, you will find some strategies and techniques to help you get through this challenging time.



## It is OK to not be OK:

First, it is OK to state openly that you are scared. This is uncharted territory. When you begin to feel anxious, take a moment to re-focus. Try a simple statement, such as, “I need to let go of things I cannot control.” Continue repeating this, or your own statement that gives you peace, until the feeling of anxiety decreases.



## Let's know the facts:

Knowledge is empowering. Information helps combat unhealthy “what ifs,” and facts allow us to create a plan. Once we feel we can control even a small portion of our lives, it can start to put us at ease. The most recent and accurate information is provided by the CDC and local health authorities.



## Limit television and social media:

The constant stream of information related to COVID-19 can cause us to start feeling more anxious and upset. Limit your exposure to the news/social media by setting a time limit per day to listen to the updates. This will give you additional time to process the thoughts you have and not feel as overwhelmed.



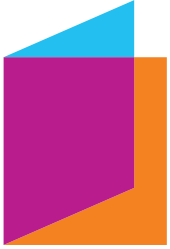
## Connect with others:

Physical distancing and safer-at-home orders can create a feeling of isolation. 55% of communication is visual and body language. Use FaceTime and other electronic resources to connect with others. Reach out to others who might need support. Stay connected with family, friends and other members of your support structure.



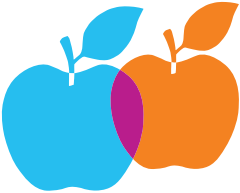
### **Be mindful:**

Be kind to yourself! Give yourself time during the day to be mindful of clearing your thoughts and feelings. Try a quick 7-8-7 breathing technique you can use anywhere: Count to seven while exhaling, inhale while counting to eight, then exhale while counting to seven again. If you want further relaxation, use visual imagery while breathing - try picturing your favorite vacation spot.



### **Activity:**

Create structure and a schedule for yourself and your family. Focus on items you might have put off until you had more time. Examples include finishing that book you have been wanting to read, working in the yard, planting flowers, crocheting, catching up on house work or just sitting on the couch and catching episodes of your favorite shows. Also, just because you are home, it doesn't mean you can't exercise.



### **Nutrition:**

Be aware of your eating habits, as they can impact your mood. Avoid excessive intake of caffeine, alcohol and unhealthy foods. Stay hydrated. Eat a well-balanced diet.



### **Talking to your child:**

Be honest. Create an open and supportive environment where children know they can ask questions. Use words and concepts children can understand. Be prepared to repeat information and explanations several times. Children learn from watching their parents and teachers, so how you respond will impact how they respond.

**Please remember to be kind, be patient and show some grace to those around you. We are all in this together.**