



HELPING HANDS



Covid Anxiety

(excerpts from ADAA.org, COVID-19 Anxiety Reduction Strategies 11/01/2020)

Successful Methods to Deal with Anxiety

Media Distancing: To stop the spread of COVID-19, we've had to practice social distancing. To stop the spread of anxiety, we must distance ourselves from the media. All anxiety stems from uncertainty and an active imagination, which can produce catastrophic thoughts. The media, which is 24/7 Coronavirus and virtually all negative, is the driver of those thoughts. People who are the most anxious about the Coronavirus are those who are consuming the most news from social media, online, and traditional outlets. The more anxious you feel, the more you should distance from the media. And if you are extremely fearful, stop altogether. Stop checking the latest news about the virus. Any vital information you need to know, you will find out.

Engage in Stress Reduction Activities: Focusing on what you are grateful for, exercising your body, and relaxing your mind will help give you the peace you desire. Guided meditation, yoga, exercise, and a gratitude journal are all practices that lower stress. Select one or two, learn about them so you do them correctly, and practice each day. If you and your loved ones are not severely sick or experiencing dire financial hardship, be grateful. Once this crisis has passed, we will all appreciate what we have taken for granted: a healthy society, freedom to gather, dinner with friends, a night at the movies, and a simple haircut.

To the extent you can, maintaining a structure to your day with some semblance of normalcy will help reduce anxiety. Much has been learned about the virus since last spring and doctors are treating it more effectively now. Unless you are in a high-risk category you do not need to lock yourself in your home. According to the New England Journal of Medicine, "Public health authorities define a significant exposure to COVID-19 as face-to-face contact within 6 feet with a person with symptomatic COVID-19 that is sustained for at least a few minutes (and some say more than 10 -15 minutes). The chance of catching COVID-19 from a passing interaction in a public space is minimal." The Journal article and subsequent articles stress the importance of wearing a mask, but maintain that the risk of contracting COVID-19 comes from "sustained contact within six feet" not from "a passing interaction." Therefore, wearing a mask when driving a car, exercising outside, or walking in a quiet neighborhood alone is not necessary. You might believe wearing masks outside is socially responsible and in some cities, it is required by law, but if you happen to cross paths with an unmasked person, there is little reason to worry.

Be Kind to Yourself and Others and Have Faith: It's normal to feel anxious and worried during a national crisis. Don't be hard on yourself. Reaching out to relatives and friends who are isolated or in need will boost their spirits and yours. If you are in good financial standing, be grateful and continue to pay others for the services they cannot provide. Venmo or mail checks to your housekeeper, hairdresser, or others who are unable to work. If you are unemployed or your business is suffering, this is tragic and may lead to depression or other mental health issues. Your new job is to manage through the crisis as best as you can until it passes. Have faith that it will, despite not having all the answers. Having faith or imagining the worst is a choice. Make a positive choice!

Seek Out Professional Help: You don't need to do this alone. If you are experiencing an escalation of anxiety, talk to a professional who can help you through this difficult time. Almost all therapists are using telehealth, so you are not limited to professionals in your area. Medication for anxiety, depression, and insomnia might also be needed short term and can be prescribed by a psychiatrist or your primary care physician.

Your local EAP Representative (listed on page 2) can help you find the most appropriate resource for your situation.

Managing Depression and Anxiety May Be Harder During COVID-19. These Tips Can Help

(excerpts from Healthline.com, Written by Cathy Cassata on January 7, 2021)

Here are some ways to help manage your mental health during COVID-19.

1. Seek social support

Although social distancing requires more time alone, getting support from others can help improve depression and anxiety symptoms. Staying connected with loved ones can be hard during the pandemic, but over time it can help you feel less lonely. In addition, many people find it helpful to work with a peer-support group, either in person or online. There are many communities to help with depression and anxiety, ask your EAP for help.

2. Keep a routine

Sticking to a routine for sleep, mealtimes, exercise, and work can help manage stress.

3. Practice gratitude and mindfulness

During challenging times, finding ways to be grateful can help cope.

Practicing mindfulness meditation has gained popularity to deal with depression, anxiety, and stress.

4. Use telemedicine

If COVID-19 is keeping you from visiting your doctor or pharmacy, but you need a new prescription, consider an alternative such as telemedicine. Your insurance company has several alternatives to access care

IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer volunteer. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer volunteers do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer volunteers will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

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Resources For Anxiety

Healthy Ways to Cope with Anxiety

Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.

Eat healthy well-balanced meals

Exercise regularly, even short walks help

Get plenty of sleep

Avoid excessive alcohol, tobacco, and substance use.

Continue with routine preventive measures as recommended by your healthcare provider.

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- while social distancing measures are in place. Try connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.