



For many, the uncertainty surrounding coronavirus is the hardest thing to handle. We don't know how exactly we'll be impacted or how bad things might get. And that makes it all too easy to become overwhelming however, there are many things you can do—even in the face of this unique crisis—to manage anxiety and fears.

Stay Informed

It's vital to stay informed, particularly about what's happening in your community, so you can follow advised safety precautions and do your part to slow the spread of coronavirus. But there's a lot of misinformation going around, as well as sensationalistic coverage that only feeds into fear. It's important to be discerning about what you read and watch thus below are some recommended sources;

Choose Reliable/Trustworthy Sources

- World Health Organization / <https://www.who.int/>
- Australia Government Department of Health / <https://www.health.gov.au/>
- NSW Ministry of Health / <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>
- QLD Department of Health / <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/>
- VIC Department of Human & Health Service / <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/>
- ABC News / <https://www.abc.net.au/>
- Public Health Information Hotline / 1800 004 599

Limit How Often You Check for Updates

Constant monitoring of news and social media feeds can quickly turn compulsive and counterproductive—fueling anxiety rather than easing it. The limit is different for everyone, so pay attention to how you're feeling and adjust accordingly.

Step Away from Media if you begin feeling Overwhelmed

If anxiety is an ongoing issue, consider limiting your media consumption to a specific time frame and time of day (e.g. thirty minutes each evening at 6 pm).

Be Careful What You Share

Do your best to verify information before passing it on. We all need to do our part to avoid spreading rumors and creating unnecessary panic.

Stay Connected – Even When Physically Isolated

Evidence shows that many people with coronavirus—particularly young, seemingly healthy people—don't have symptoms but can still spread the virus. That's why the biggest thing that most people can do right now to make a positive difference is to practice social distancing.

However, we're hardwired for connection and isolation and exacerbate anxiety which has an impact on our physical health. That's why during this period of Social Distancing we can still remain social, ways that we can remain connected include;

- Remembering that we're all in this together.
- Use internet platforms to see family and friends; Skype, Facebook Messenger, Zoom, WhatsApp & Discord are all good options.
- Recreate or modify your social activities to an online version, for example a coffee/beer with a friend over Skype.
- Talk about things other than Coronavirus.
- Bond with those you are in physical contact with in your household.

Focus on the Things You Can Control

When you feel yourself getting caught up in fear of what might happen, try to shift your focus to things you can control. For example, you can't control how severe the coronavirus outbreak is in your city or town, but you can take steps to reduce your own personal risk (and the risk you'll unknowingly spread it to others), such as:

- Washing your hands frequently (for at least 20 seconds) with soap and water or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoiding touching your face (particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth).
- Staying home as much as possible, even if you don't feel sick.
- Avoiding crowds and gatherings of 10 or more people.
- Avoiding all non-essential shopping and travel.
- Keeping 6 feet of distance between yourself and others when out.
- Getting plenty of sleep, which helps support your immune system.
- Following all recommendations from health authorities.

Plan for What You Can

It's natural to be concerned about what may happen if your workplace, your children have to stay home from school, you or someone you love gets sick, or you have to self-quarantine. While these possibilities can be scary to think about, being proactive can help relieve at least some of the anxiety.

- Write down specific worries you have about how coronavirus may disrupt your life. If you start feeling overwhelmed, take a break.
- Make a list of all the possible solutions you can think of. Try not to get too hung up on "perfect" options. Include whatever comes to mind that could help you get by.
- Focus on concrete things you can problem solve or change, rather than circumstances beyond your control.
- After you've evaluated your options, draw up a plan of action. When you're done, set it aside and resist the urge to go back to it until you need it or your circumstances significantly change.

Take Care of Your Body & Spirit

- Be kind to yourself. Go easy on yourself if you're experiencing more depression or anxiety than usual. You're not alone in your struggles.
- Maintain a routine as best you can. Even if you're stuck at home, try to stick to your regular sleep, school, meal, or work schedule. This can help you maintain a sense of normalcy.
- Take time out for activities you enjoy. Read a good book, watch a comedy, play a fun board or video

game, make something—whether it's a new recipe, a craft, or a piece of art. It doesn't matter what you do, as long as it takes you out of your worries.

- Get out in nature, **if possible**. Sunshine and fresh air will do you good. Even a walk around your neighborhood can make you feel better. Just be sure to avoid crowds, keep your distance from people you encounter, and obey restrictions in your area.
- Find ways to exercise. Staying active will help you release anxiety, relieve stress, and manage your mood. While the gym and group classes are out, you can still cycle, hike, or walk. Or if you're stuck at home, look online for exercise videos you can follow. There are many things you can do even without equipment, such as yoga and exercises that use your own bodyweight.
- Avoid self-medicating. Be careful that you're not using alcohol or other substances to deal with anxiety or depression. If you tend to overdo it in the best of times, it may be a good idea to avoid for now.

Help Others (It Will Make You Feel Better)

It's no coincidence that those who focus on others in need and support their communities, especially during times of crises, tend to be happier and healthier than those who act selfishly. Helping others not only makes a difference to your community—and even to the wider world at this time—it can also support your own mental health and well-being.

Even when you're self-isolating or maintaining social distance, there's still plenty you can do to help others.

Follow guidelines for preventing the spread of the virus. Even if you're not in a high-risk group, staying at home, washing your hands frequently, and avoiding contact with others can help save the lives of the most vulnerable in your community and prevent overburdening the healthcare system.

Reach out to others in need. If you know people in your community who are isolated—particularly the elderly or disabled—you can still offer support. Perhaps an older neighbor needs help with groceries or fulfilling a prescription? You can always leave packages on their doorstep to avoid direct contact. Or maybe they just need to hear a friendly, reassuring voice over the phone. Many local social media groups can help put you in touch with vulnerable people in your area.

Donate to food banks. Panic-buying and hoarding have not only left grocery store shelves stripped bare but have also drastically reduced supplies to food banks. You can help older adults, low-income families, and others in need by donating food or cash.

Be a calming influence. If friends or loved ones are panicking, try to help them gain some perspective on the situation. Instead of scaremongering or giving credence to false rumors, refer them to reputable news sources. Being a positive, uplifting influence in these anxious times can help you feel better about your own situation too.

Be kind to others. An infectious disease is not connected to any racial or ethnic group, so speak up if you hear negative stereotypes that only promote prejudice. With the right outlook and intentions, we can all ensure that kindness and charity spread throughout our communities even faster than this virus.

YOU MATTER. ALWAYS.