

Psychological Tips for Managing Coronavirus Concerns

Understandably, you or those around you may have questions and concerns about Coronavirus (COVID-19). The umass.edu/coronavirus page is frequently updated with the latest communications and advisories. If you would find it helpful to talk with a mental health clinician about your concerns, call us at 413-545-2337. In addition, the following tips can help you manage stress and anxiety that may arise in the midst of uncertainty or fears about health and personal safety.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH TIPS

- **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.
- **Maintain your day-to-day activities** as much as possible while socially distancing. Set a schedule for sleep, exercise, and studying. Take walks or jog outdoors or work out with [Campus Recreation](#). Make a [study plan](#) that breaks large tasks into [smaller steps](#).
- **Connect with friends, family, and classmates** to maintain your support network while socially distancing. Resist withdrawing and isolating yourself from the support and caring that others can provide.
- **Seek accurate information** from The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and limit exposure to social media and news reports that provide no new information.
- **Pay attention to positive news** instead of only focusing on negative and fear-producing reports.
- **Follow the protection and prevention tips** given by medical professionals such as [University Health Services](#) here on campus, national medical authorities, and your own medical doctor.
- **Practice calming rituals:** Use [stress management](#) and [relaxation](#) techniques to help you maintain an internal sense of stability and balance when outside events feel threatening.
- **Seek supports & use campus resources.** Reach out to friends and family and learn about campus resources. If you or someone you know has significant distress that does not seem to be getting better, talk about it with others or reach out to CCPH. Your campus community is here to help!

AVOID STIGMATIZING OR GENERALIZING

- **Be aware of your behavior or attitude change** toward 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.

RECOGNIZING DISTRESS: A SELF CHECKLIST

- *Increased anxiety, worry, fear, and feelings of being overwhelmed*
- *Depressive symptoms (e.g., intense sadness, irritability, lethargy, loss of pleasure, etc.) that persist and/or intensify*
- *A new inability to focus or concentrate*
- *A feeling of hopelessness and/or a paralyzing fear about the future*
- *Sudden anger and disruptive behaviors or noticeable changes in personality*
- *Changes in sleep patterns – either getting too much or not enough sleep*
- *Changes in appetite and eating behaviors*
- *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)*