

Self-care strategies for COVID-19

Taking care of yourself during upheaval and disruption

**Know
yourself**

**Manage your
Self Talk**

**Cultivate your
mindset**

**Maintain
Physical
health**

Self care strategies for COVID 19

**Know your
support
network**

**Develop
Routines**

Use humour

**Tend to
relationships**

Know yourself

By knowing ourselves well we are better able to manage anxiety & stress. Knowing yourself allows you to:

- Identify the Early Warning Signs that you are struggling & take appropriate self care action
- Understand the things you are sensitive to & avoid or limit your exposure to them – (be especially aware of your consumption of media & social media)
- Understand the actions, people & processes that support your wellbeing
- Understand & be grateful for the protective factors around you & in your life
- Know the things that you can do for yourself that really work to make you feel safe, happy, secure, connected & well. These are the things that 'fill your cup'.

Manage your self talk

By managing your Self Talk you can change the way you experience challenges, setbacks and achievements too. Managing self talk is element of managing your mindset. Remember to:

- **challenge unhelpful thoughts**

Eg *'nothing will ever be the same again'*

Questions to challenge this thought could be:

- What is the evidence of this?
- Is there some good that might come from this?
- What assumptions am I making?

- **create positive self talk**

Examples include:

- I am a good person living through a difficult time
- I do the best I can with what I know at the time
- This won't last forever
- I control my actions
- I am connecting with the people I love

Cultivate your mindset

By cultivating a mindset that helps you grow, meet challenges, accept setbacks, and recognize the good things around you, you will be more able to cope through this time.

- Actively bring your attention to good things around you every day and especially in moments of stress
- Practice generosity & gratitude
- Engage your senses
- Learn from achievements and setbacks
- Look for the action you can take or the adjustment you can make
- See effort as you advancing and stretching not as you not being 'good' at something

At the end of everyday ask yourself:
“what were my 3 good things today?”

Maintain physical health

Eating well, exercising & sleeping are some of the most important things you can do right now for both your physical & your mental health. Looking after your health will help you manage stress more effectively & help your immune system stay in tip top shape.

- Eat more vegetables, fruit & nuts
- Eat less sugar & processed foods
- Drink more water
- Drink less alcohol and caffeine
- Try for 30minutes of exercise each day – anything you like (maintain social distancing)
- Keep a regular sleep routine – get up and go to bed at the same time each day
- Aim for 8 hours sleep if you can
- If you can't sleep still rest

Know your support network

We are social creatures & we need meaningful social connections for our wellbeing. Right now, we have to change how we create these connections and look for new ways of being 'with' others.

Think about the people you have in your life who are your supports, who you enjoy being with & talking to. Make sure you maintain regular contact with these people (call, text, email & video chat).

Reach to people who may be a little more isolated or who you know are less likely to pick up the phone themselves.

A chat and a laugh together can change a person's day.

Don't underestimate the impact you can have.

Develop routines

If you are working from, doing reduced hours or just have less commitments on your plate right now it can be tempting to indulge in long sleep ins and just let the day wash past you. This is fine from time to time but overall our mental health and wellbeing is better maintained by keeping to our routines.

- Get up and go to sleep at the same time each day
- Have your meals at regular times
- Have an exercise routine
- Shower & dress as normal
- Keep to your work schedule
- Create windows where you call & check in on family & friends

Our brains like predictability & patterns.

Use humour

Finding the humour in challenging situations is a great way to manage and reduce stress. It also helps to give you a sense of control over how the difficulties impact you.

Humour is a great tool for helping us see familiar situations from different perspectives and it can take the 'sting' out of hardships and adjustments.

Look for the things that give you a laugh in every aspect of life. Enjoy the lightness of it and don't feel guilty for finding the fun.

Tend to your relationships

Navigate your significant relationships with care. Everyone is under pressure & living with uncertainty & this can put a strain on relationships.

Chances are you've never spent quite so much time, in such close proximity to your significant other. Try be thoughtful of each other, gentle, forgiving and remember what makes you a great team.

For your kids, remember: they understand and hear more than we think; they take their emotional cues from their significant adults; this is a huge event in their young lives; they can catch up on education later (just keep them reading, playing & creating); we can build resilient, mentally healthy kids by how we lead them through this challenge.