



Looking after your mental health during the Corona Virus pandemic

The personal, business and employment implications etc. of coronavirus (COVID-19) is making many people feel anxious and stressed. The fear of not knowing what is going to happen increases feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. The following tips to help reduce anxiety and stress during this time:

1. Source information from credible sources:

There are lots of information sources (conversational and social media) out there making claims and predictions, some of which are very alarming. While these could or might be true, that is the point, there is lots of speculation and little certainty. The most reliable strategy is to get information from official sources to avoid misinformation. Some good information sources are:

- <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>
- <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus>

2. Manage time on online and listening to news:

Whilst it is important to stay informed, constant negative information is bad for our mental health and it is easy to get drawn into opinions and misinformation. Set yourself a time limit each day to check in, and make sure you balance time online with fun or relaxing activities as well. ... *This too shall pass.*

3. Have conversations with children and family members:

Sharing information in an appropriate way helps children manage their own anxiety. Honest conversations help dispel any misinformation or coronavirus myths they may have heard. Having regular family conversations that discuss any updates and explain safety measures are important.

4. Take care of the health basics:

Make sure you eat healthy food (don't overeat for comfort), do exercise such walking every day, have a good night's sleep and reduce alcohol, caffeine, smoking and other drugs.

5. Utilise relaxation techniques:

If you are feeling anxious or stressed, take a moment to consciously relax. There are many things you can try, including deep breathing, walking the dog, reading a book, having a cup of tea, listening to some favorite music. Often shifting your focus can make a big difference. Now may be a good time to learn mindfulness. There are several Apps that can help. You can compare them here:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/top-meditation-iphone-android-apps>

6. Be a good neighbor:

Helping others is a good way to make us feel better. Are there any people around you who might be struggling that you could check in with? Supporting the elderly and the vulnerable people in our community is important at this time. An old secret ... "helping others helps yourself".

7. Seek support from online and phone services

If you're feeling distressed or overwhelmed it's important to reach out. Call the Beyond Blue Support Service on 1300 22 4636 or go online at [beyondblue.org.au/getsupport](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport) for online chat (3pm-12am AEST)

Find tips to reduce anxiety at <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak?>

For immediate support call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or try the Lifeline text service (evenings) 0477 13 11 14. In an emergency, always call 000

Remember: *This too shall pass.*