

## Coping with Anxiety during COVID-19 Pandemic

Many people find it difficult to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic because of the number of drastic and rapid changes happening in everyday life. The following evidence-based strategies may help preserve our psychological well-being and lessen our emotional distress.

	<p><b>Accepting negative emotions</b>, rather than avoiding them, can lead to better psychological health. Fighting uncomfortable feelings can only make them stronger and last longer.</p> <p>Emotions come as a wave- it may feel intense at times but the uncomfortable feeling does not last forever. Practice allowing negative emotions to pass without changing or stopping it from happening.</p>
	<p><b>Limit exposure to news and social media reports</b> about COVID-19. The more we think about and focus on the pandemic, the more our anxiety will increase.</p> <p>Try to check the news only a couple of times a day, and at set times. Seek information only for the purpose of gathering facts from reputable sources. Avoid constant streams of news reports and/or conversations about COVID- 19. However, do not avoid the news all together- it is important to stay informed to protect yourself and loved ones.</p>
	<p><b>Create new routines.</b> Coping during a pandemic is a marathon rather than a sprint. To adapt to the loss of usual routines, think of ways to reinvent your hobbies and/or habits.</p> <p>Planning a daily structure and setting new goals can increase a sense of predictability and purpose during unsettling times. Practice good self-care that includes regular meals, rest, physical activity and social contacts (virtual or phone).</p>
	<p><b>Distinguish fact from fear.</b> Anxiety often leads us to perceive a situation as being far worse than it actually is.</p> <p>It is important for us to recognize and label when we are feeling anxious. This can help us react to unknown situations with a rational rather than fear-based mind.</p>
	<p><b>Build resilience through your coping strategies.</b> What helps you unwind or cope during difficult times? Draw on these techniques to help you build resilience. Consider experimenting with new coping strategies, such as building a relaxation and/or mindfulness meditation practice.</p>