

IMPORTANCE OF LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Maintaining mental health in an extended and uncertain crisis can be difficult. This ever-evolving situation can considerably increase stress. There is an element of the unknown and situations can change quickly.

To help with this, here are **six ways** to help support your mental health during this time.

1. Accept your worries

Anxiety, fear, anger and frustration are all normal. These are a sign that your body's natural protective mechanisms have been triggered. Having a moderate level of anxiety means that you are more likely to take precautions, which is good right now. **Accepting that these feelings are normal**, instead of pushing them down and trying to ignore them, has shown to make them less prominent in our minds.

2. Look after yourself

By looking after yourself and **engaging in positive behaviours** such as getting good sleep, eating a balanced diet and exercising, you will be protecting yourself both physically and mentally from the virus.

3. Focus on what you can control

When we feel that a threat is uncontrollable and there is nothing we can do about it, we are also less likely to engage in problem solving and be able to protect ourselves when we need to. **We can't change or control everything**, but there are elements of our day to day lives that we are in control of. You can take preventive measures like washing your hands often, cleaning the high traffic areas of your home and maintaining physical distancing whenever possible.

4. Think about your impact on others

Thinking about others may help you focus on looking after yourself and engaging in preventative measures more consciously.

5. Focus on the present moment

In a threat such as this, we find ourselves worrying about the 'What if?' and what could happen in the future. This can lead to us feeling overwhelmed and paralyzed with concerns that we have no control over.

It is important to try and **take a step back and focus** on what is happening right here and right now. You can do this by dividing your day and thinking about each smaller task you need to accomplish.

6. Don't be afraid to ask for help

If you are finding that you are feeling overwhelmed by your fears and are struggling to control them, it is likely that this is affecting both your home and work life. You may benefit from some professional support.

There are a number of resources available to you, including the confidential services provided under our Employee Assistance program 1-800-387-4765.