

Dealing With Stress & Anxiety During COVID-19

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for many of us. The fear and anxiety about a disease may be overwhelming, causing a higher level of stress. During this pandemic we have been faced with abrupt changes in our daily lives such as stay-at-home orders, loss of jobs, closing of schools, and health scares, among other things. It is important to remember that some things are beyond our control, and will naturally create stress, but we can develop healthy ways to cope with this pandemic. If you have experienced stress or anxiety, this group session could be for you.

Common issues surrounding COVID-19 that may lead to anxiety or increased stress levels include:

- Concern about protecting oneself from the virus because they are at higher risk of serious illness.
- Concern about loss of job(s) due to company closures, furloughed jobs, reductions in work hours, or self-employment stopping.
- Concern about homeschooling and/or working from home.
- Feeling socially isolated, especially if living alone.
- Having mental health concerns before the outbreak, such as depression.
- Living in lower-income households or having language barriers.

Reactions to stress and anxiety during this time may look like:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

Healthy ways to cope with stress and anxiety during this pandemic:

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories.
- Take care of your body, by eating healthy, exercising, getting rest, & avoiding drugs and alcohol.
- Make time to unwind, do things you enjoy regularly.
- Connect with others. Talk, text, or video chat with friends and family.
- Express your feelings and concerns in a journal.
- Learn and share the facts about COVID-19 and help stop the spread of rumors.

Related Resources

- [Disaster Distress Hotline website](#), call 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746
- Hope4NC Helpline (1-855-587-3463) connects North Carolinians to additional mental health and resilience supports
- healthydurham.org has local resources and support during COVID-19