

DEALING WITH STRESS AND ANXIETY DURING COVID-19

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) may lead to stress and anxiety for some of us. Feeling overwhelmed by strong emotions during times like these is totally understandable. Coping with distress and fear in a healthy way will help ensure that you, your loved ones and everyone in our communities stay strong and resilient during this time.

CHECK IN

Check in with family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and loved ones. Do it by phone, SMS or online. It always helps to talk. Acknowledging your own feelings of distress and discussing this can also help you manage anxiety and stress.

MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS

Start a group chat, hang out through video conferencing, share pictures of your outfits or something positive that happened to you recently. Social distancing does not mean social isolation. Think of it as physical distancing instead.

STAY CONNECTED TO COMMUNITIES

While the places we hang out are temporarily unavailable, we can still keep in touch with our communities. Follow your favourite event/bar/club on social media, listen to a queer podcast, watch or read LGBTQ media. Fostering a sense of community is important at this time.

TAKE A BREAK

Take a break from your newsfeed and focus on something else. Replace the time you spend on social media or watching the news with an activity that'll nourish and entertain your heart and mind: read a book, indulge in your favourite TV show, bake some goodies or play a game on your phone.

SET A ROUTINE

If you're self-isolating, in quarantine or working from home, set and maintain routines. Make time for exercise using YouTube or a fitness app, cooking your favourite meals, getting in touch with friends. If you're working remotely, allocate specific work hours and take regular breaks.

UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVITY

A creative project will help focus the mind. Dust off your painting kit or reorganise your décor. Do an online language course or download a yoga app. There are thousands of tutorials on YouTube on just about any hobby – so why not learn how to knit, draw, dance? The digital world is your oyster.

HAVE A BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

It's natural to be affected by the outbreak of any new disease. Just remember that, for most people, the symptoms of COVID-19 are mild and similar to a flu. Australia has one of the world's best healthcare systems. Everything is being done to ensure communities are safe and protected.

HELP OTHERS

Happiness is helping others and it is also good for your mental health. Look out for those in your own personal networks who may need support. Look in on your mates to see if you can help with essential supplies, or send an order of goodies to someone who may be doing it tough.

REMEMBER

This is temporary. Physical distancing measures are enforced to slow the spread of COVID-19. We must all play our part. Our communities have rallied together in times of adversity to care for each other before, and we will do so again. We're all in this together.

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

ACON provides confidential counselling to people in our communities seeking support in relation to their mental health and wellbeing. Contact ACON on (02) 9206 2000 or 1800 063 060 or go to acon.org.au. You can also get in contact with other mental health services including Qlife on 1800 184 527, beyondblue on 1300 22 4636 or Lifeline on 13 11 14.

This resource has been put together by ACON counsellors.

