

# WHAT TO DO, WHEN I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

KEY STRATEGIES FOR SELF-CARE & REFLECTION IN [ISOLATION]

PRESENTATION CREATED BY: NICOLE SOUDERS, LMFT

## NATURAL REACTIONS TO STRESS DURING A CRISIS INCLUDE:

- Fear & Worry about your own health OR the health of those you care about
- Changes in your *sleeping* and/or *eating* patterns
- Difficulty sleeping and/or concentrating (**this can make it difficult to focus on: work, school, relationships, etc.**)
- Worsening of current chronic health issues you may have (or someone else you know has)
- Increased use of: alcohol, drugs, tobacco, & other ways of coping and/or numbing/escaping current stress

UGH-OY-SERIOUSLY?!?!



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## WHAT TO BE AWARE OF AS A PARENT:

- Recognizing that not all children & teenagers will respond similarly to the changes of this crisis.
- Excessive crying or irritation in younger (0-12 y/o) children.
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (i.e. toileting accidents or bedwetting, etc).
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs (adolescents/teens preferably)
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating and/or sleeping patterns
- Irritability and 'acting out' behaviors in teenagers
- Poor school performance or avoiding school completely
- Difficulty with attention & concentration
- Avoidance of activities they enjoyed in the past

## POSSIBLE FACTORS THAT MAY IMPACT CHILDREN EMOTIONALLY DURING THIS TIME:

- Direct involvement with the emergency (i.e. have a family member testing positive for COVID-19 or parent is on the frontlines helping)
- Previous traumatic or stressful event that they are reminded of
- Belief that the child or their loved one may die or become sick
- Loss of a family member, close friend or pet
- Separation from any caregivers (those the child would normally see that they haven't seen lately)
- Physical injury
- How Parents & Caregivers respond during this time
- Family resources
- Relationships & communication among family members
- Related exposure to mass media coverage of the crisis & aftermath
- Ongoing stress due to the change in familiar routines & living conditions
- Cultural differences
- Community resilience

## HOW DO I SUPPORT MY FAMILY?

- Talking openly with children/teens about the current COVID-19 outbreak.
- Answer questions & share facts that are understandable.
- Reassure children/teens they are safe.
- Let them know it is OKAY to feel: upset/scared/worried
- Let them know how you are working through this time.
- Limit your family's exposure to news coverage on the event-including social media.
- Continue regular routines prior to crisis- OR begin creating new routines/schedules
- As a FAMILY: take breaks from work/school, get sleep, exercise, eat well.
- Connect with others as much as possible to stay involved in others' lives & NOT isolate.

## STEPS TO CARE FOR MYSELF & LOVED ONES

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when you are sick- EXCEPT to get medical care
- Cover your coughs/sneezes-try to use a tissue if possible
- Washing hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap & water
- If there isn't soap/water- hand sanitizer of 60% alcohol
- Clean & disinfect surfaces around home/car (I.e. tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs & cabinet handles)
- Launder items in WARMEST water, including plush toys for kids.

## WHAT DOES *ANXIETY* LOOK LIKE?

- Feeling agitated or angry
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Defiance or other challenging behaviors
- Having high expectations for yourself- including school/work/sports/relationships/etc.
- Avoiding activities or events (cancelling at the last minute)
- Struggling to pay attention and focus
- Intolerance of uncertainty (needing to know everything)
- Desire to control people and/or events
- Crying and difficulty managing emotions (feeling like a rollercoaster)
- Feeling worried about situations or events (future tripping)
- Over planning for situations and events (what if this happens...?)



## WHAT ANXIETY FEELS LIKE

- Second-guessing yourself
- Muscle tension
- Sweating, a lot
- Trouble sleeping
- Chest pain (can feel like difficulty taking deep breaths)
- Over-thinking all things (replaying conversations in your mind)
- Increased heart rate
- Your mind & body refusing to cooperate, no matter what you know is rational

## WHAT DOES *DEPRESSION* LOOK LIKE?

- Feelings of: guilt, worthlessness or hopelessness
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Decreased energy & tiredness
- Insomnia or oversleeping
- Difficulty concentrating & making decisions
- Low appetite or increased appetite
- Irritability
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide

## WHAT DEPRESSION FEELS LIKE

- Body aches
- Headaches
- Digestive issues (IBS)
- Back pain
- Chest pain
- Muscle cramps
- Lack of energy
- Loss of motivation
- Substance abuse

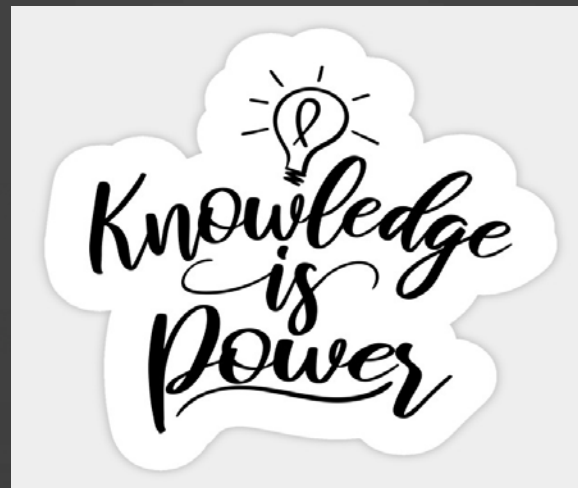
## STRATEGIES TO HELP WITH OUR MOOD

- Taking calm breaths
- Stop magnifying problems
- Stop worrisome thoughts
- Shift your point of view
- Combat negative self-talk
- Ask yourself, “what do I need right now?”
- Make a gratitude list
- Talk to someone
- Think of something funny
- Create a schedule
- Start somewhere, anywhere
- Try 4,3,2, 1.

## TURN YOUR BRAIN OFF & TRY TO MOVE

- Dance to your favorite song
- Take a walk
- Do the basics of PT (push up/jumping jacks, etc)
- Clean the house (pick a spot & go for it)
- Try an online workout (youtube/pinterst/apps)

**“THEY SAY ‘KNOWLEDGE IS POWER’. BUT MORE POWERFUL THAN KNOWLEDGE, IS UNDERSTANDING. WITH UNDERSTANDING, COMES TOLERANCE. AND, WITH TOLERANCE, WE CAN MOVE BEYOND BARRIERS.” – MICHAEL ARLEN**



## RESOURCES:

- Disaster Distress Helpline – 1-800-985-5990
- National Domestic Violence Hotline – 1-800-799-7233
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration's – TEXT 66746
- Veterans Crisis Line – 1-800-273-8255 (press 1)
- U.S.VETS, Women Vets on Point – 1-213-247-0009
- U.S.VETS, Outside the Wire, OC – 1-888-556-9993
- [www.usvetsinc.org](http://www.usvetsinc.org)

## HELPFUL LINKS

- Evolution of COVID-19 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/summary.html#cdc-response>
- COVID19 Basics-Questions & Answers [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#anchor\\_1584388857241](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#anchor_1584388857241)
- Children in Disasters- Stories & Interactive Games <https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/children>