

Emotional Considerations During COVID19: Guidelines for Building Resilience and Managing Stress

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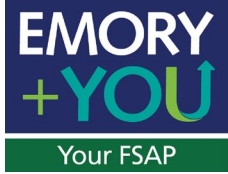
Emory School of Medicine

Common Reactions

- Fear of uncertainty
- Resentment/anger (towards the public, the government, the healthy, non-health care workers)
- Sadness
- Grief
- Terror (fear of death, personal contagion, contagion to family)
- Crisis of “faith in the mission,” “why am I doing this?”

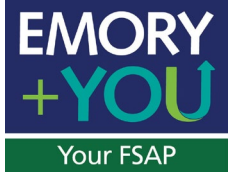
Common Reactions

- Worry e.g. “who will replace me if I get sick?” “what if I get sick?” “what will I do for money?”
- Resignation to possible infection and wish “to get it over with”
- Feeling contaminated and like a contaminant
- Increasing sense of cabin fever (no escape at home)
- Awareness of meaning and reordering of priorities



Organizational Strategies

- Clear consistent messaging from Leadership
- Transparency
- Creating single points of access for information and supportive services
- Creation and dissemination of lists of NOW resources concurrent with the development of new systems and services
- Teleconferencing of supportive interventions of various lengths depending on capacity and needs of employee population



Personal Stress Management Strategies

Basic Self Care

- Maintaining and Attending to Physiology
 - Sleep even if brief (the body's way of restoring itself)
 - Nutrition, remembering to eat twice, Gatorade and Ensure at work and home
 - Exercise either walking in non-dense areas or home gym within consistent with personal containment strategies
 - Take prescribed medications, avoid alcohol and monitor caffeine

Personal Stress Management Strategies

- Maintaining and Initiating Social Connection
 - Knowing glances with co-workers
 - Talking about non-work at work
 - Virtual connections with friends and family, reconnecting (with judicious use of social media)
 - Relating to family and friends in creative ways
 - Virtual church, religious or spiritual
 - Talking frankly and directly to family about risks and joint development of a plan (family resilience building)

Personal Stress Management Strategies

- Exercise Stimulus Control to regulate mood and well being
 - Build in COVID-free time (media and social media diet)
 - Mindful use of distraction and stimulation (tv, music, reading) with mood and well being in mind
- Learn about and practice mindfulness
 - Headspace and CALM apps
 - Develop basic regular practice and SOS strategies
 - Develop an emotional transition regimen when leaving work for home

Resilience for the Long Haul

- Commitment to Basic Self-care and use of accountability partners
- Development of a social connection, stimulus control and mindfulness habit plan
- Healthy Attitudes: acknowledge limits of control, “one day at a time”, focus on what can be controlled, this too shall pass, look for opportunities for meaning and re-framing.
- Embrace spiritual growth (look for meaning, transcendence)