



SELF-CARE DURING TIMES OF STRESS AND UNCERTAINTY

1. BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF; DO NOT COMPARE YOURSELF WITH OTHERS

During times of heightened stress and uncertainty, it is easy to become more self-critical. This is largely due to the fact that our reasoning and regulation capabilities are diminished by our brain's stress response system, making it difficult to keep perspective. Give yourself extra grace and compassion to work through this period of time.

2. ACKNOWLEDGE THE PAINFUL AND DIFFICULT EMOTIONS

Acceptance and acknowledgement of the painful emotions you are experiencing is an important step to coping with stress and uncertainty in healthy ways that will move you toward positive adaption.

3. ACCEPT THE PRESENT AS IT IS, WITHOUT PREDICTING WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BRING

Often when we experience heightened stress and uncertainty, we can worry a lot about what tomorrow might bring and go into catastrophizing mode—predicting that the future is bleak. The reality is that we do not know what the future will bring. Focus on today and accepting the current state of things before trying to worry about tomorrow.

4. ASK FOR AND ACCEPT HELP FROM OTHERS

This is crucial. None of us can navigate these precarious times alone. People need people to be resilient through crisis. So do not be afraid to rely on others who, in turn, will need to rely on you.

5. RECOGNIZE THAT THERE WILL BE GOOD AND BAD DAYS

There will be good days and bad days throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Allow yourself to enjoy the good ones, and keep perspective with the bad ones—they too will pass.

6. CREATE ROOM FOR REST

Some of our acts of “rest” and “relaxation” are not so restful or relaxing. Put aside the electronics, get personal space if possible, and allow yourself to just be. Rest is one of the best things you can do to help reduce stress amidst uncertainty.





7. EXERCISE

Exercise is one of the most effective tools that we have to ward off symptoms related to depression and anxiety. Be sure to engage in regular exercise—preferably the kind of exercise that raises your heartrate and blood pressure for a sustained period of time.

8. SPEND TIME IN NATURE

Studies have shown that spending time in nature on walks, hikes, or simply sitting and meditating reduces stress and anxiety. Find a park, local trail, or your favorite tree and spend time connecting with the outdoors. Oh, and don't forget to put aside the phone and be present!

9. KEEP TO A ROUTINE

When things are uncertain, the world can feel out of control. You can regain a sense of agency and control over your own world by keeping a consistent routine.

10. STOP ASKING “WHY?” AND START ASKING “WHAT WILL I DO NOW?”

Why? As humans, we have an insatiable need to know the answer to this question. Often there are no good answers to this question, particularly when it comes to experiences of loss and uncertainty. The reality is you may never find the answer to that question, but you can control how you respond.

