Stress Management Techniques & Tips for Coping with COVID-19

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Learning Objectives

• Define stress
• Identify common stressors in quarantine
• Identify strategies to cope with stress
• Discuss stress management techniques
How are you feeling today?
Fast Facts: Stress

• Stress is a normal reaction to everyday pressures but can become unhealthy when it upsets your day-to-day functioning.
• Stress can be positive or negative.
• Learning healthy ways to cope can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms.

(CDC, "Tips for Coping with Stress", 2019)
# Common Signs of Stress

## Psychological
- Depressive symptoms
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Rumination, racing thoughts, constant worry
- Problems with memory and decision making

## Physical
- Low energy
- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Aches, pains, and tense muscles
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Changes in eating patterns

(Mayo Clinic, "How stress affects your body and behavior", 2019)
A Review of the Psychological Impact of Quarantine:

During Quarantine
• Concern about basic needs
• Worry about staying well-informed
• Psychological distress
• Fear for own and others’ health
• Frustration and boredom

After Quarantine
• Financial hardship
• Anger and anxiety
• Stigma
• Avoidance behaviors

(Brooks et al., 2020)
The Stress of Working Remotely

- Working around the clock.
- Feeling isolated, chronically fatigued, and unmotivated.
- Procrastination, forgetfulness, lack of productivity.
- Anxiety about not doing enough work or fatigue from doing too much work.
- No clear difference between when we work and when we are just at home.
- Lack of routine.

(Center for Workplace Mental Health, "Working Remotely During COVID-19", 2020)
What can we do?

1. Develop resilience
2. Engage in healthy behaviors
3. Practice self-care
4. Incorporate stress management strategies into our everyday life
Resilience

• Resilience is a process that helps individuals reach good outcomes in the face of adversity.

Build resilience by…

1. Developing relationships & staying connected with others
2. Practicing self-care
3. Finding your purpose
4. Accepting change
5. Learning from your past

(American Psychological Association, "Building your resilience", 2020)
Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

- Take care of yourself.
- Talk to others.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol.
- Take a break from the news.
- Recognize when you need more support.

(CDC, "Tips for Coping with Stress", 2019)
Why is it important to practice self-care?

• Practicing self-care helps maintain a healthy relationship with yourself.
• Self-care can help to increase positive feelings, confidence, and self-esteem.
• Self-care helps replenish your resources.

(Tello, "6 self-care steps for a pandemic - always important, now essential", 2020)
You can’t pour from an empty cup!

- Things that take from your cup
  - Stressful situations
  - Fear and anxiety
  - Overworking
  - Fatigue

- Things that add to your cup
  - Personal Time
  - Rest and relaxation
  - Fun activities
  - Activities that add to personal wellness
Stay Connected

• Schedule times to talk with people
  • Phone calls
  • Video chat
  • Apps that allow for interaction (Google Chat, Zoom, FaceTime, WhatsApp, etc.)
  • Games that allow virtual interaction
    • Virtual support groups
Self Check-in Checklist:

- How do I feel right now?
- Is there any tension in my body?
- What are my emotions/body trying to tell me?
- What needs are not currently being met? How do I meet them?
Physical Wellness

• Drink water
• Practice mindful eating
• Stretching, yoga, light workouts, dance parties
  • Take relaxing baths and showers
  • Keep moving your body
Sleep

• Stay on a schedule
• Create a relaxing routine before bed
• Cut out caffeine in the late afternoon
• Do something quiet and relaxing before bed
• Consider white noise machine/relaxing music
Stay Informed

• Get information about COVID-19 from reputable sources
  • Reduce stigma and false information surrounding COVID-19
• Take breaks from the news and social media
Meditation

- Guided meditation on YouTube, Apps, Podcasts, etc.
  - Guided imagery
  - Guided breathing
  - Meditation music
  - Body scan
Grounding

- Breathe: *Inhale (4) - Hold (7) - Exhale (8)*
- Connect yourself to the ground
- Describe your surroundings in detail
- Activities that require 5 senses
  - Wearing your favorite sweater, essential oils, having a cup of tea
- Progressive muscle relaxation
Apps for Self-Care

- Meditation and Breathing
- Music
- Writing
- Coloring
Listen to Podcasts

• Popular Topics
  • News
  • History
  • True Crime
  • Technology
  • Comedy
  • Storytelling
  • Relationships
  • Business
  • Society & Culture
  • Sports
  • Investing
Not sure where to start? Take 5!

- **Take 5 minutes to…**
  - Do nothing
  - Breathe
  - Drink a warm beverage (tea, coffee, etc.)
  - Stretch
  - Read
  - Listen to music
  - Light a candle/incense/diffuser
  - Journal
What will you be adding to your cup?

Type an activity you'll add to your self-care into the chat!
Questions?