

# **Managing Stress and Anxiety During the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Our bodies are designed to react to anything that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain, i.e., stress.

Stress can be positive, say when it helps you complete a project at the required time, and negative when it's out of control and lands you into a state of depression, substance abuse, etc.

It's very normal for people to feel uncomfortable in new, challenging situations, more so now given the uncertainty that has resulted from Covid-19. All sorts of feelings and thoughts tend to run and fill our minds. Such feelings and reactions include helplessness, restlessness, anxiety, worry, fear, sadness, frustrations, loss of interest in usually enjoyable activities, disconnection from others, difficulty in concentrating or sleeping, and lack of being able to stay relaxed.

In the face of this global challenge, these experiences are understandable since our lives have so drastically changed. And since stress is a necessary evil, managing it is a life hack everybody needs to have.

## **Strategies to manage stress and anxiety during the pandemic**

When you feel overwhelmed and things are getting out of hand, the most effective way to manage such a situation is to focus on what you can control.

Below are some of the ways we can manage stress and anxiety during the pandemic. ~~period.~~

### **1. Acknowledge your feelings**

You might feel overwhelmed, stressed, and depressed during this period of lockdown and travel restrictions especially if you have medical conditions that require in-person medical attention.

First of all, you need to know it's okay to feel what you are feeling. Allow yourself to express what you are feeling by doing what you love most like exercising, listening to music, or drawing.

### **2. Maintain your day-to-day activities**

A healthy routine nourishes your thoughts and feelings. You can do so by exercising, getting enough sleep, and eating healthy meals.

### **3. Learn how to protect yourself and others from Covid-19**

The WHO<sup>1</sup> has laid out measures to protect yourself from Covid-19. These measures include self-isolation, wearing masks, sanitizing and washing hands, as well as maintaining social/physical distance. Adhere to these to prevent oneself and the loved ones from contracting Covid-19.

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<sup>1</sup> WHO – World Health Organization

#### **4. Stay Connected**

Receiving support and care from your loved ones helps with coping with the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

Doctors have always recommended people have a support system. It is very important especially during this pandemic time to have people who are supporting you both mentally and emotionally.

It can be hard to maintain social connections during the pandemic period, but who said we need to meet physically to maintain this. We can get connected through several ways courtesy of technology such as Zoom, Skype, or Google Meet.

Remember physical distance does not mean being socially disconnected!

#### **5. Have limits around news and social media**

It's understandable to want to be informed, but constant watching, reading, or listening to upsetting media coverage can be uncomfortable, and intensify worries and agitations. Check the updates when needed and let them pass without judgment. Schedule a regular, specific time to do this to save yourself from more stress.

#### **6. Seek accurate information**

Having credible sources is ~~very~~ key because it deals away with unnecessary fear and panic that can cause many other health complications (up to and including heart attacks!).

#### **7. Journal!**

Write down your thoughts and feelings every day. Then write down one thing you're grateful for each day. Because you don't want to repeat the same thing every day, it'll force you to find a multitude of things you'll be grateful for. Practicing gratitude helps relieve stress and creates a more positive attitude towards life...and who can't use some more of that!

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