

Family Coping Strategies for COVID-19

Having effective coping skills is always important for mental health. Over the last few weeks, many discussions have focused on helpful ways to cope with anxiety due to the COVID-19 virus. Here below are some suggestions from a variety of sources – including families.

- Limiting the amount of news coverage

It's important to obtain accurate and timely public health information regarding COVID-19, but too much exposure to media coverage of the virus can lead to increased feelings of fear and anxiety.

- Maintaining a daily routine
- Getting adequate sleep
- Eating well and drinking warm liquids
- Engaging in daily exercise (walking everyday for at least 30 minutes)
- Staying virtually connected with others home, text messaging, video chatting and email
- Engaging in a hobby and creating things
- Reading
- Listening to music
- Watching a movie
- Listening to a comedian (child friendly - such as Ismo, Jim Gaffigan)
- Building a puzzle
- Connecting with a pet (if you have one)
- Examining your worries and aim to be realistic in your assessment of the actual concern as well as your ability to cope. Try not to catastrophize; instead focus on what you can do and accept the things you can't change. One way to do this is to keep a daily gratitude journal. You may also choose to download smartphone applications that deliver mindfulness and relaxation exercises. For example, Insight Timer and Calm are very positive apps. These contain coping and resilience resources such as exercises for deep breathing, positive imagery, muscle relaxation and more.
- Focusing on the altruistic reasons for social distancing, quarantine or isolation can also help mitigate psychological distress. Remember that by taking such measures, you are making a contribution to reducing the possibility of transmitting COVID-19 and protecting those who are most vulnerable

Additional Resources:

- GeroCentral Covid-19 Resources
Resources for clinicians, older adults and families
- Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020
- Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019
The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2020

Calgary Emergency Resources:

If you or a family member is experiencing a mental health emergency in Calgary, please proceed to your nearest emergency department or contact the Distress Centre at (403) 266-4357 or the Community Resource Team at (403) 299-9699.

Emergency Mental Health Walk-in Clinics include:

The Sheldon Chumir Centre – (403) 955-6200

The South Calgary Health Centre – (403) 943-9300

Kids Help Phone is also a valuable resource offering free, confidential counseling to kids and youth. The number to call is: 403-264-8336. There's also an option to email, text or chat online.

Email: ConneCTeen@distresscentre.com

Text: 587-333-2724

Online Chat: CalgaryConneCTeen.com