

10 Tips to Manage Stress, Anxiety, Depression and Disconnect During this Time of our Pandemic

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1. Mindfulness-

- Simply put, it means to pay attention, wake up, and be aware. Up until this time, many of us have been living on auto-pilot. However, in order to suppress the curve of the corona virus outbreak, we have needed to adapt to practicing some behaviors that have gone by the wayside in our culture.
- Try looking at social distancing as respecting others personal space and boundaries. Try looking at washing our hands and practicing personal hygiene as a radical act of kindness towards ourselves and others in terms of not contributing to the spread of the virus. Try making getting enough sleep at night a priority, as most Americans are sleep deprived anyway.
- By simply paying more attention to how we are contributing, in a positive and concrete way, towards not spreading the virus, we can feel good about doing these things as opposed to seeing them as, "just another thing we have to remember to do..."
- Think for your own protection that everybody else already has the virus. This is not to scare you even more, but to help shift your awareness into taking the necessary precautions to protect yourself.

2. Find Balance by Giving It A Rest-

- Lie down or sit down, and simply "experience" stillness for a few minutes. This practice can help build peace within you, that, if done over time, can help you to weather life's struggles.
- A mentor of mine once exposed me to the concept of designating one day out of the week as a "grub day". In other words, on this day you give yourself permission to just hang out with yourself without any expectations. And a day that you might consider wasted isn't really wasted. It can be seen as a way to enable yourself to find balance. After all, we are human "beings" NOT human "doings".

3. Just Do One Thing-

- This was an idea I have incorporated into my practice of therapy, particularly when we are feeling anxious or depressed about our circumstances. Sometimes we can get overwhelmed by the never ending "to do lists" that we impose upon ourselves. This only increases our anxiety /depression. By just doing one thing, we can gain an instant hit of "dopamine" by the good feelings of accomplishing a task. We also build momentum, or movement, which enables us to keep moving.

- If you are a person that likes to have things super planned out and organized, you can use this concept to plan out what you might do on each day, when you will do it. This will give you a sense of having more control over your situation since you are imposing routine and structure into your day.

4. One Day At A Time-

- Try to stay present, in the here and now. It may sound trite, however, it's still relevant.
- If we get too far into the future, we will get anxious, if we ruminate about the past, we will get depressed.
- Best to take another route and ask yourself, "am I o.k. , right now?".

5. Use Creative Ways to Stay Connected-

- Thank God that we do have the internet, texting, chats, and our own personal cell phones to give each other support when we need it.
- Checking in with how someone else is doing and what they might be going through can help get you out of your own head and maintain perspective.
- Remember to utilize the good support systems you already have, and if you don't have a lot of support, it never hurts to seek out the help that you need.

6. Don't Be Afraid to Disconnect-

- Yes, sometimes it is necessary to disconnect ourselves from whatever it is that is consuming our attention and perhaps draining our energy.
- In a world of 24/7 connectivity this can be a real challenge, however, I believe it can be done when we feel ourselves begin to feel too much fear, anxiety, and overwhelm.
- It can be as simple as not turning on the t.v. for the hour you have free.

7. Exercise

- Whether it happens to be inside or outside, weather permitting, exercise is a great way to focus on your present experience and sort through your thoughts and feelings. Just a 15 minute walk has proven to boost endorphins. These are the chemicals in the brain that come with and after exercise that help us feel more relaxed and at ease.

8. Take Inventory

- During times of stress it can be helpful to take an inventory of all the things that are going well for you in your life.
- Sometimes we don't realize or appreciate the things that are going well in our life until they are no longer in our life or part of our routine.

- It can be quite a wake up call when we finally do realize that despite our current circumstances, we can still find things in our life to be grateful for.

9. Try Exercising or Being in Nature

- Anything from walking, yoga, and stretching, to just getting outdoors for some fresh air has been proven to improve mental health.
- If you can't get to a gym, be creative and find some guided exercise videos you can do at home.

10. Start to think of what you want to do when this is over with

- Start to think of what you look forward to doing when this outbreak is more under control.
- This may lead you to start planning and maybe even beginning to work on certain things so that when you do get the chance to get outside, you have already set the groundwork for your projects.

11. Lean on the Lord

- I can think of no greater time to connect with your faith than now. When we know that our God is watching over us, we really have nothing to fear.
- "Be Still...and know that I Am God" ...is one quote that comes to mind for me.
- "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me..."

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