



Coping in Uncertain Times

With current closures, changes in employment, and potential risks to health, all of us are dealing with significant changes to our lives. Each of us will respond differently, and anything you are feeling is normal. Common feelings could include loneliness, grief, sadness, fear, anxiety and stress. During this time of increased stress and uncertainty, one thing we can do is be intentional about how we are taking care of ourselves.

Due to closures, many of us may not have access to our usual supports. This requires us to get creative with new ways to cope. It can be difficult to create new patterns even in the best of times, so please be patient with yourself.

In high stress times, it is normal to fall back on old patterns which may include unhealthy coping strategies. If this happens, try not to be too hard on yourself. Try to come up with a plan to make a different choice next time.

When being intentional about how we are taking care of ourselves, we want to consider how we are taking care of our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. Below is a list of things to try. Everything on the list factors in social distancing. Following the list is a worksheet for assessing how you are currently coping and trying new things.

Physical

- Try going to bed and waking up at the same time each day
- Keep up with your regular hygiene routines (showering or having a bath, brushing teeth and hair, getting dressed even if you aren't leaving the house)

- Take all medications as prescribed
- Eat regularly
- Drink water
- Be as active as possible. If you are not required to self-quarantine, take a walk around the block. If in quarantine, move around your backyard if you have one or open the windows and move around your home. Use exercise equipment if you have, try a yoga video, do light stretching, run on the spot, have a dance party with yourself, get creative with movement!

Mental

- Work on a puzzle
- Sudoku, crosswords
- Watch a documentary
- Read a book
- Play a strategic game online by yourself or with friends
- Visit a virtual tour of a museum or art gallery
- Focus on a project (get a room organized, build something... even out of LEGO)

Emotional

- Check in with how you are feeling (let yourself cry, feel angry, take breaks...)
- Connect with a friend, family member, or coworkers

- Connect with a professional support
- Journal
- Limit the amount of news you are taking in
- Set boundaries with people in your life about how much/when you have space to talk
- Do something creative (colour, draw, craft, make cards for loved ones, sew, knit...)

Spiritual

Spirituality is different for everyone.

- If you are involved with a faith-based group, stay connected if you can. Many places are doing services online and some have e-mail chains or plans to keep connected by phone
- Keep up with any spiritual rituals you may have
- Pray
- Meditate
- Be in nature if you can
- Speak to others that share your spiritual views
- Read literature that helps you feel connected to your faith

Current and New Coping Strategies

Coping strategies that I still have access to:

1.

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Coping strategies that I don't currently have the same access to:

(e.g. going for a walk, going to church, meeting a friend for lunch)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

For each item, ask yourself what part of that coping strategy is helpful to you:

(e.g. going for a walk might be to get exercise, fresh air, or both. Going to church may be for the community atmosphere, the connection to your faith, or both.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

For each item, come up with a different way to achieve this:

(e.g. if going for a walk is less about the exercise and more about the fresh air, maybe you can just open a window. If it is about exercise, see if you can find a workout video online, or do other activities such as sit ups, push ups and running on the spot.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

New ideas for coping strategies that I will try:

- 1.

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.