

## Tips for Working with Fear and Worry Related to the Coronavirus

As we navigate this new territory of the Coronavirus and COVID-19, it is not surprising that many of us are experiencing moments of fear and worry. This is an unknown; and the unknown by its very nature can activate the amygdala, the fear center in our brain. The alarm sounds and before we know it we are having a stress response of fight (agitation), flight (restlessness and inability to focus), or freeze (shut down and unmotivated).

If this is happening to you right now, know that you are normal and not alone. These uncertain times call for sound practices to manage our fear and worry. Here are some tips you may find helpful:

1. Engage in some type of physical activity to help the body discharge the jangly, restless feelings that come with anxiety. Walking, running, or yoga can help.
2. This may sound counterintuitive but it is a good practice to befriend your fear and worry. Instead of pushing it away, notice where it is in your body and what it needs from you. Take some deep breaths and send compassion to yourself. Remind yourself that fear and worry are mental states and like all mental states they will pass.
3. Stay mindful and present. This can be done by doing a simple check-in with yourself. Take 10 normal breathes and just notice your feet on the floor and the chair holding you. Ask yourself, "Am I safe right here right now?" More often than not, the answer will be yes. This is a simple yet effective way to turn off the panic alarm.
4. Fear and worry are time travelers and tend to live in the future. They like to show us all the possible scenarios of what could happen to help us to be prepared. The problem is, this increases rather than decreases fear. Stay present. To bring yourself back to the present, play this little game. Find one thing in the room that has textures, one thing that is blue, one thing made out of wood, and another made out of glass. Use this to anchor yourself in the here and now. There is nothing else.
5. Talk to someone you know who is grounded and calm. Minimize contact if you can with people who tend to be negative and alarmists.
6. Try meditation or centering prayer. There are many YouTube videos that offer instruction on how to begin and sustain these practices.
7. Eat healthy food and drink lots of water. Avoid the inclination to eat high carbohydrate comfort foods and drinking too much alcohol.
8. Stay aware of what you can and cannot control.
9. Seek information from credible sources such as the CDC and WHO. Be careful to be cognizant of what is a fact and what is an opinion.

Be positive and kind toward each other. We are all in this together. Know that Employee Assistance is here for you. Let us help.

**Call 1-800-367-6577.**

