

# Mental Health and Resilience

This booklet contains information about:

- Stress, anxiety and depressions associated with COVID-19
- Strengthening Resilience

## Preface

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. The WHO constitution states: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." An important implication of this definition is that mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities.

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Mental health is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world.

The current COVID19- pandemic is a particular and rare situation. It can affect people physically, but also psychologically. In this type of context, many people will experience stress, anxiety and depression reactions. This page should be seen as a tool that can help you to minimize the repercussions of these kinds of reactions on your life.

## What does stress mean?

Stress is a normal physiological response to an abnormal situation. As such, it is part and parcel of our lives. It enables our body to adapt to the multiplicity of positive and negative events that we experience, like a birth, marriage, loss of employment, etc. Stress comes and goes on its own, depending of what factors are involved.

## What does anxiety mean?

Contrary to fear, which is a response to a well-defined and very real threat, anxiety is a response to a vague or unknown threat. Anxiety manifests itself when we believe that a dangerous or unfortunate event may take place and are expecting it. Everyone experiences anxiety at their own individual degree and intensity. How the anticipated event is perceived will greatly influence the intensity of the anxiety experience.

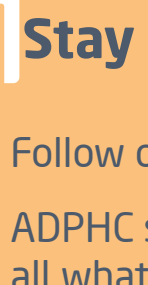
It's worth mentioning that most times we are anxious about matters that are very unlikely to happen.

## What does depression mean?

The dictionary defines depression as a passing state of lassitude, discouragement and sadness. Depression can appear in a variety of physical and psychological ways. Its intensity varies from one person to the next.

**Stress, anxiety and depression reactions can appear in a variety of physical, psychological, emotional and behavioral ways for any given individual.**

### Physical symptoms



Headaches, neck tension, gastrointestinal problems, etc.



Sleep problems

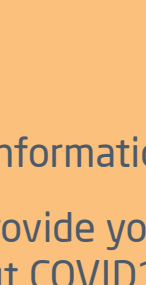


Lower appetite



Lower energy, fatigue, etc.

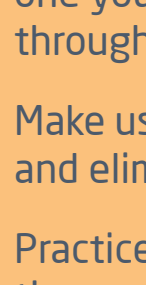
### Psychological and emotional symptoms



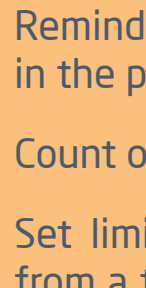
Virus-related worries and insecurity



Feelings of being overwhelmed by events, powerlessness



Negative vision of things or daily events



Feelings of discouragement, insecurity, sadness, anger, etc.

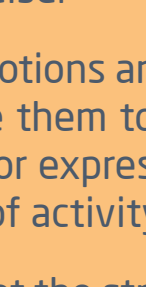
### Behavioral symptoms



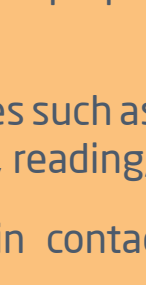
Difficulty in concentrating



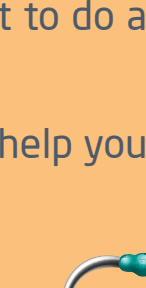
Irritability, aggression



Crying



Withdrawal, insularity



Difficulty in taking decisions

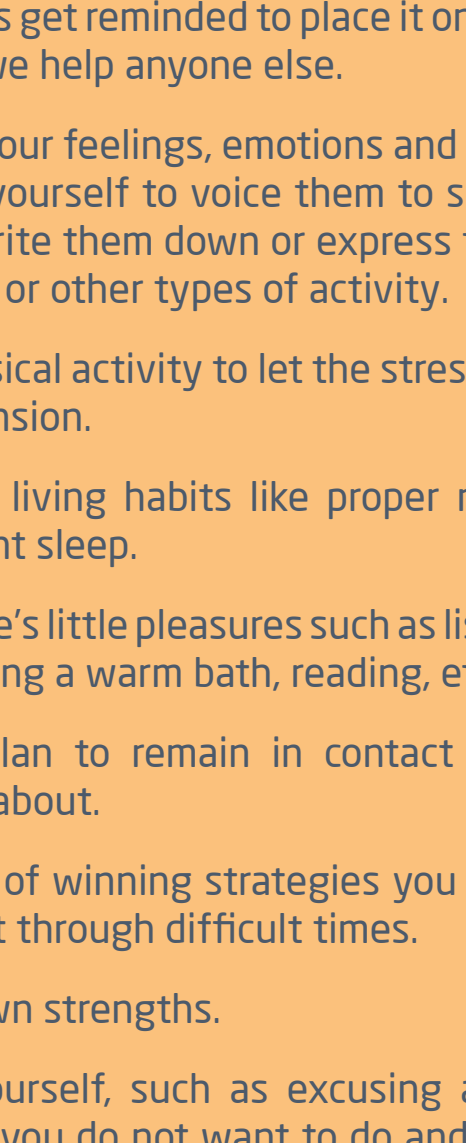


Leaning towards tobacco and/or alcohol or other

## How can we deal with day to day stressors related to COVID19?

### 1 Stay Informed

- Follow only reliable sources of information.
- ADPHC social media accounts provide you with all what you need to know about COVID19 in a simple and clear language.
- Be wary of sensationalist news reports from little known or dubious sources. Take the time to confirm such information with officially recognized sources.



### 2 Take care of yourself

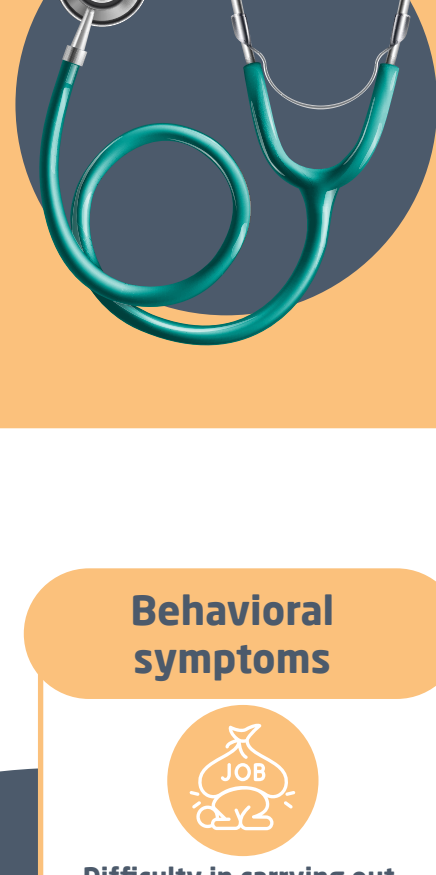
- Remember the safety tip when on an airplane about emergencies and the placement of oxygen masks. We always get reminded to place it on ourselves BEFORE we help anyone else.
- Be attentive to your feelings, emotions and reactions and allow yourself to voice them to someone you trust. Write them down or express them through physical or other types of activity.

Make use of physical activity to let the stress out and eliminate tension.

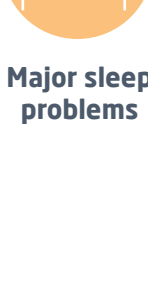
- Practice healthy living habits like proper nutrition and sufficient sleep.
- Allow yourself life's little pleasures such as listening to music, taking a warm bath, reading, etc.
- Put an action plan to remain in contact with people you care about.
- Remind yourself of winning strategies you used in the past to get through difficult times.
- Count on your own strengths.
- Set limits for yourself, such as excusing away from a task that you do not want to do and that is non-essential.
- Learn to delegate and let others help you.

### 3 Ask for professional help

Generally speaking, overcoming reactions to stress, anxiety and depression is possible. Still, some unease may persist for some weeks or months, and even worsen. The following may be signs that your state of health is deteriorating.



### Physical symptoms



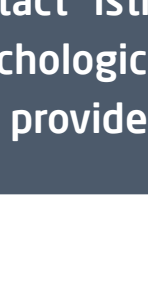
Feelings of suffocation, rapid heartbeat, dizziness, nausea



Major sleep problems

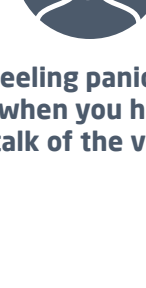


Pronounced reduced appetite, possibly associated with weight loss



Low energy and pronounced fatigue or exhaustion

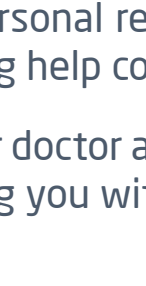
### Psychological and emotional symptoms



Anxiety and overwhelming fear



Feeling panicked when you hear talk of the virus

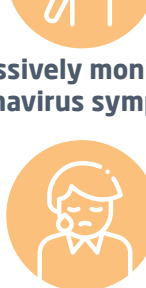


Negative pervasive thoughts



Loss of pleasure and interest in activities that you usually enjoy

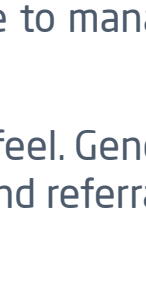
### Behavioral symptoms



Difficulty in carrying out daily tasks



Avoiding anyone from outside the home because of fear of contagion



Obsessively monitoring coronavirus symptoms



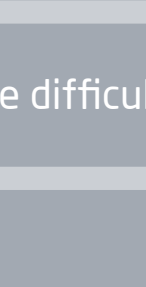
Intense, frequent crying



Pronounced irritability and aggression, conflict with other members of the household



Inability to concentrate



Alcohol, drug and medication abuse

## Individual Resilience

It's highly likely that everyone in the world dealt with some level of stress, anxiety and/or depression during the pandemic.

But how can we build our 'immunity' and resilience to cope and thrive in such times (or any difficult times)?

### What is Resilience?

Resilience has been described as the "ability to succeed, to live, and to develop in a positive way despite the stress or adversity that could involve the possibility of a negative outcome". It is the ability to maintain personal wellbeing in the face of challenge.

Resilient individuals are able to:

- Care for themselves and others day-to-day and during difficult situations.
- Actively support their neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities to recover after disaster.
- Be confident and hopeful about overcoming present and future difficulties.
- Able to manage strong feelings and impulses
- Get needed resources more effectively and quickly.
- Be physically and mentally healthier.
- Maintain stable family and social connections.
- Re-establish routines more quickly
- Help others find meaning and be positive

## Ways to Strengthen Resilience

You can build your resilience by taking care of your health, managing stress, and being an active participant in the life of your community.

Practice reframing negative thoughts

Develop coping skills and practice stress management activities, such as yoga, exercise, and meditation

Get plenty of sleep

Volunteer in your community

Finding time to unwind

Find things that bring you pleasure and enjoyment such as reading a book or watching a movie, writing in a journal, or engaging in an art activity

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Look for the good in the unfavorable situations. Instead of telling yourself that "nothing will ever be the same," you can reframe it to "maybe something positive can come from this"

Eat healthy and exercise

Maintain social connections to people and groups that are meaningful for you

Get training in First Aid, CPR, CERT, & Psychological First Aid

Be on a mission to explore your self and learn and refine your skills

Get a coach, mentor and attend trainings on self-efficacy