



# Coping with COVID 19

Coping with the New Normal

Maintaining our mental health and talking to students about it

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# Introductions

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Counseling services available via Zoom, email or phone.

Monday through Thursday, 10:00 am – 6:30 pm

To schedule a meeting with Counseling staff, please

- Call our front desk at: 763-493-0554
- Email us at: [counseling@nhcc.edu](mailto:counseling@nhcc.edu)

# Mental Health Implications

It's normal to feel abnormal in a situation that's not normal

# Adapting to the “New Normal”

Infectious disease outbreaks are one of the most distressing forms of disaster to deal with psychologically because of the uncertainty they cause

- No clear time boundary
- Ongoing feeling of being “at risk”-
  - Not like fight or flight
    - Can take a toll on our bodies and mind
- Creepy to think that we may have been exposed to something that will make us sick in the future
- Guilt about simple actions like going to the grocery store

# Grieving

- Things that we were used to doing
- Things that we were looking forward to
- Seeing friends and family, co-workers
- Support Networks
- Jobs
- Loss of expected rites of passage experiences
  - End of year events
  - Graduation

Not knowing when it will end

# 5 Stages of Grief

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

Kubler Ross & Kessler

# Added Stressors

Social isolation

Learning a new way to learn/work

- Not having the needed technology/resources
  - Having to share with others
- Not having time management skills
- Not having dedicated space
- School as sanctuary
- Online not addressing your learning style

# Added Stressors

- Increased time with family
- Having to care for children
- Limited time outside
- Job loss/uncertainty/changes
- Racism, Xenophobia
- Stigma, feelings of being ostracized if diagnosed



What Can We Do?

# Recognize Your Stress

## Symptoms:

- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Interpersonal problems
- Tension
  - Physical reactions
- Reduced energy
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Anger or short-temper
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety or fear

# Manage Your Emotions

Notice if symptoms are related to stress

- Common to miss signs
- Acknowledge so you can manage
- Get to them before they grow
- Ignoring doesn't help
- Can become overwhelming

# Know Your Limits

Pay attention:

- Notice patterns, trends
  - Make a habit of checking in with emotions
- What makes the stress better
  - What has helped in the past
- What makes it worse
  - Build boundaries around those areas
- Ignoring may make worse

# Name it and Tame it

Recognize that it makes sense to feel anxious in these circumstances

Pause and reflect on what you're actually concerned about:

- You getting sick, family member
- Job, money, school?
- Limited resources, like TP?

Probably a combination of potential issues of varying levels of seriousness

- Mashed up together into a single swirling cloud of anxiety and dread that feels impossible to handle

# Break it Down

Break down that cloud into manageable parts:

- Exactly what is worrying you
- Make a list
- How likely it is that each of those threats really will impact you?
- What is likely
- What can you control (at least partially)
- What can't you control

# Change What You Can

- Tackle the things you actually can alter
- Implementing problem-focused coping strategies
- May involve a kind of second-level approach
- Make a plan for what you can control
- Make a back-up plan
  - Sense of control can reduce anxiety and make you feel prepared

# Accept What You Can't Change

For issues you can't really control or change:

- Using emotion-focused coping strategies:
  - Mindfulness, exercise, journaling, taking a break, distraction, cooking, scream into a pillow, nature
  - Think about what has worked for you in the past
  - Do something that helps you feel and function better



# Practice Self Care

Self-care is the active process of acknowledging and tending to your needs

Preventative care:

- Eating nutritious foods, staying active, and getting adequate rest

Intervention self care (when showing signs of stress):

Look at the symptoms to come up with coping strategies:

- Back pain = stretching, yoga, chiropractor
- Difficulty concentrating, low energy = plenty of rest

# Build Your ToolKit

The more strategies you have in your toolkit, the better

Different situations call for different coping skills

Need to adapt to COVID

Example: Fitness center closes down

- Be creative
- Explore related skills

# Some Examples

- Projects, crafts, house, etc.
- Meditate
- Clean
- Play with a pet
- Read a book
- Music
- Call a loved one
- Watch your favorite movie
- Practice gratitude
- Take an online class
- Host a virtual gathering

# Limit Consumption of News

Need to be informed, but not main focus

- Conflicting news and misinformation
- Conflicting agendas:
  - Political, selling products
  - Compounds confusion and stress
- Rapidly evolving
  - Hard to keep up with
- Limit exposure
  - 1 or 2 times a day
  - Don't keep it top of mind all day every day

# Seek Accurate, Reliable, Scientific Guidance

Centers for Disease Control website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>

To keep up with local impacts:

- choose a single news source you've found to be reputable in the past
- set yourself a schedule for when you'll check for updates.

Reduces stress by not keeping it top of mind

# Limit Social Media

- Positive sources of social support
- Not good places to get reputable information
  - Questionable theories and rumors
    - Upping confusion and stress

# Don't Judge Yourself or Others

Degrees of concern based on personal factors:

- Individual situation
- Personal characteristics
- Criticizing others across both ends of the reactivity spectrum
- Different reaction styles and coping methods
- Causes friction and limit their ability to support each other during these trying times
- Make an effort to tolerate different reactions

# Stay Connected!

- Isolation can make symptoms worse
- Reach out to loved ones regularly and check in



# Cultural Considerations

# Addressing Racism

Southern Poverty Law Center:

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/speaking-up-against-racism-around-the-new-coronavirus>

Asian American or Pacific Islanders (AAPI) being targeted

- Have a heightened awareness of what your students are saying in spaces inside and outside of the classroom
- Disrupt and address issues of hate and bias
- Know the historical context
- Respond immediately to any news of a student repeating racist or xenophobic language
- Attend to any students or colleagues who have been harmed by anti-AAPI speech or rhetoric
- Educate students, having critical conversations, how to spot biased reporting

# How to Report/Respond

Home/ About NHCC/ College Policies, Procedures, and Disclosures/ Disclosures/  
Discrimination and Harassment Resources/ Harassment

[https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?NorthHennepinCC&layout\\_id=3](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?NorthHennepinCC&layout_id=3)

Responding to hate and bias guide for educators:

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/responding-to-hate-and-bias-at-school>

Southern Poverty Law Center:

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/speaking-up-against-racism-around-the-new-coronavirus>

# International Students

- Travel restrictions
- Embassies shut down
- Changing visa policies
- Inadequate internet access back home
- Housing issues
- Illness or death of loved ones
- Don't have support system
- Don't know how to advocate
- No clear guidance
- Stigma
- Not eligible for work, benefits
- Uncertainty of how family is faring
- Going home, different time zone
- Health-related issues
- Quarentines when returning
  - Might have to pay for hotel

# Supporting International Students

- Provide mental health services
- Check in
- Be an ally
- Be flexible
- Share resources

When someone is diagnosed

# Stigma

Some groups of people who may be experiencing stigma because of COVID-19 include:

- Persons of Asian descent
- People who have traveled
- Emergency responders or healthcare professionals

Stigmatized groups may be subjected to:

- Social avoidance or rejection
- Denials of healthcare, education, housing or employment
- Physical violence
- Mental health issues

# Know the Facts!

Be informed, know the facts and share them with others in your community

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/share-facts.html>



# What We Can Do

- Maintain privacy and confidentiality
- Quickly communicate the risk or lack of risk from associations with products, people, and places.
- Raise awareness about COVID-19 without increasing fear
- Share accurate information about how the virus spreads
- Speak out against negative behaviors, including negative statements on social media about groups of people, or exclusion of people who pose no risk from regular activities

# What We Can Do

- Be cautious about the images that are shared. Make sure they do not reinforce stereotypes.
- Engage with stigmatized groups in person and through media channels including news media and social media.
- Thank healthcare workers and responders.
- Share the need for social support for people who have returned from affected countries or are worried about friends or relatives in the affected region.

# What We Can Do

Show support!!

Show that you care!!

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