

Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people and communities. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. The emotional impact of an emergency on a person can depend on the person's characteristics and experiences, the social and economic circumstances of the person and their community, and the availability of local resources. People can become more distressed if they see repeated images or hear repeated reports about the outbreak in the media.

People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include:

- People who have preexisting mental health conditions including problems with substance use
- Children
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders

Reactions during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- Fear and worry about your own health status and that of your loved ones who may have been exposed to COVID-19
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

Coping with these feelings and getting help when you need it will help you, your family, and your community recover from a disaster. Connect with family, friends, and others in your community. Take care of yourself and know when and how to seek help is extremely important for your overall health and the health of those around you.

Call your healthcare provider or the Miami-Dade County Employee Assistance Program if stress reactions interfere with your daily activities for several days in a row.

Things you can do to support yourself:

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of COVID-19.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis

and see images repeatedly. Try to do other activities that you enjoy to assist you in returning to your normal life.

- Connect with others. Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships.
- Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking.

Source: www.cdc.gov

Miami-Dade's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential service which focuses on assisting those who are struggling with personal problems that may be affecting their ability to function at home, work or in the community. EAP counselors focus on supporting employees with internal and external referrals and resources to assist with setting the foundation for restoration and enhancement of emotional and mental wellness. You can call 305-375-3293 to set up a confidential appointment or telephonic support session with a counselor.