

The Science of Mood, Anxiety and Motivation

Coping with Change in the Age of COVID-19

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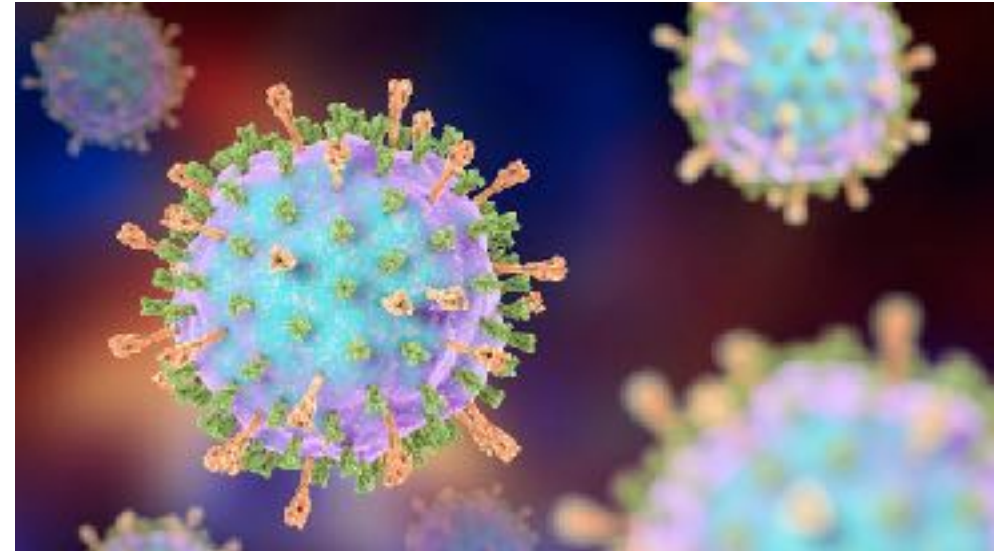


Agenda

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Why COVID-19 Is So Unique

- Unpredictability
- Uncertainty
- Transmission rate and mortality rate
- Misinformation
- Social isolation
- Economic impact
- Fear and panic about resources



The Harmful Effects of Mental Health Stigma

What stigma can lead to....

- Feelings of shame, hopelessness and isolation
- Reluctance to ask for help or get treatment
- Lack of understanding by family, friends or others
- Self-doubt – the belief you will never overcome your illness

How you can deal with stigma...

- Get the treatment you need.
- Connect with others.
- Understand that **you are not your illness.**



Why We Worry

- Fear about running out of essential supplies
- Anxiety, particularly about being separated from loved ones
- Uncertainty about how long you will need to stay at home
- Concerns for your physical safety and that of others
- Fear of getting sick



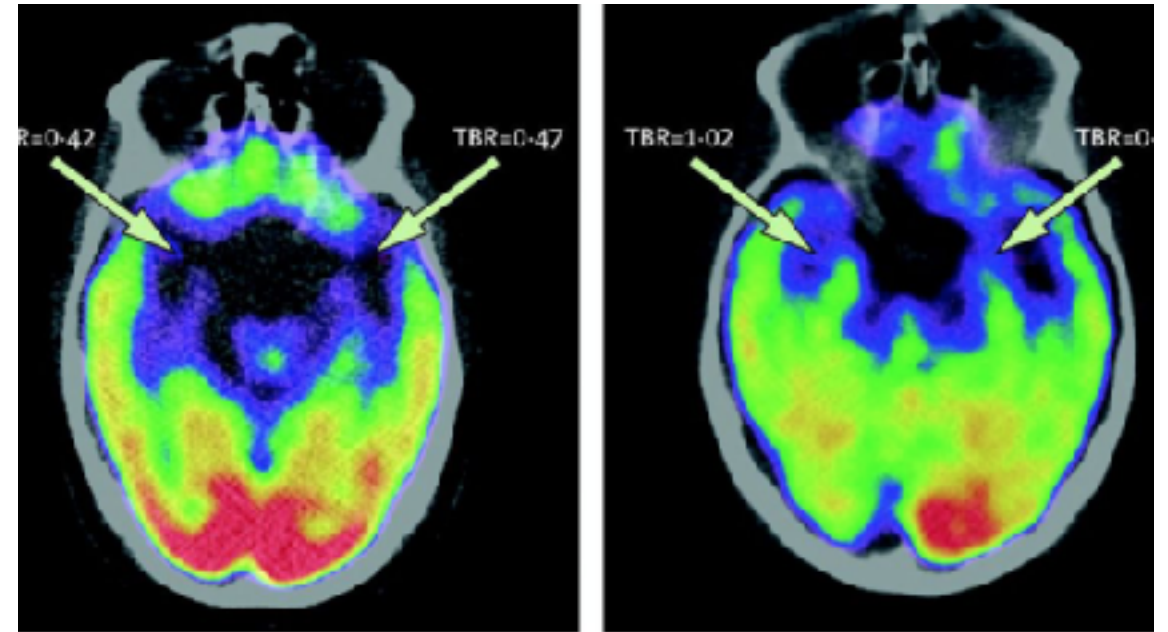
Why We Worry

- Guilt about not being able to fulfill responsibilities, such as work, parenting or caring for dependents
- Boredom or isolation
- Thoughts of blame, worry or fear
- Worry about loss of income
- Fear of being stigmatized or labeled if you become sick

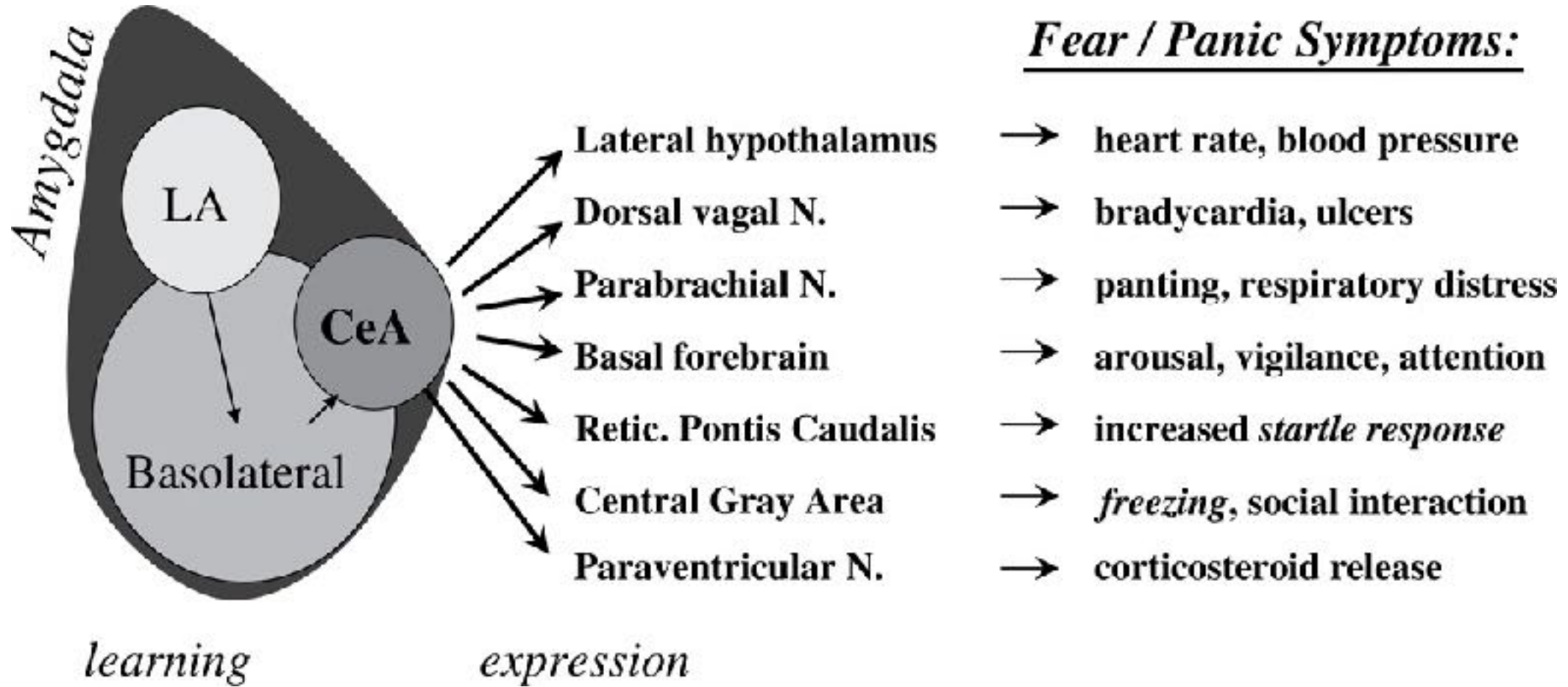


The Science of Anxiety

- Our brain senses a 'threat'
- Brain responds with initiation of 'fight or flight' response
- The limbic system (hypothalamus, thalamus, hippocampus and amygdala regions) is responsible for the emotions processing
- We experience physiological symptoms: rapid heart rate, heart palpitations, muscle tension, headache, diarrhea, pale or flushed skin
- Our brain cells (neurons) communicate via hormones (neurotransmitters)
- Serotonin: responsible for mood, sleep or appetite
- Norepinephrine: linked to alertness and attention
- GABA: slows down signals

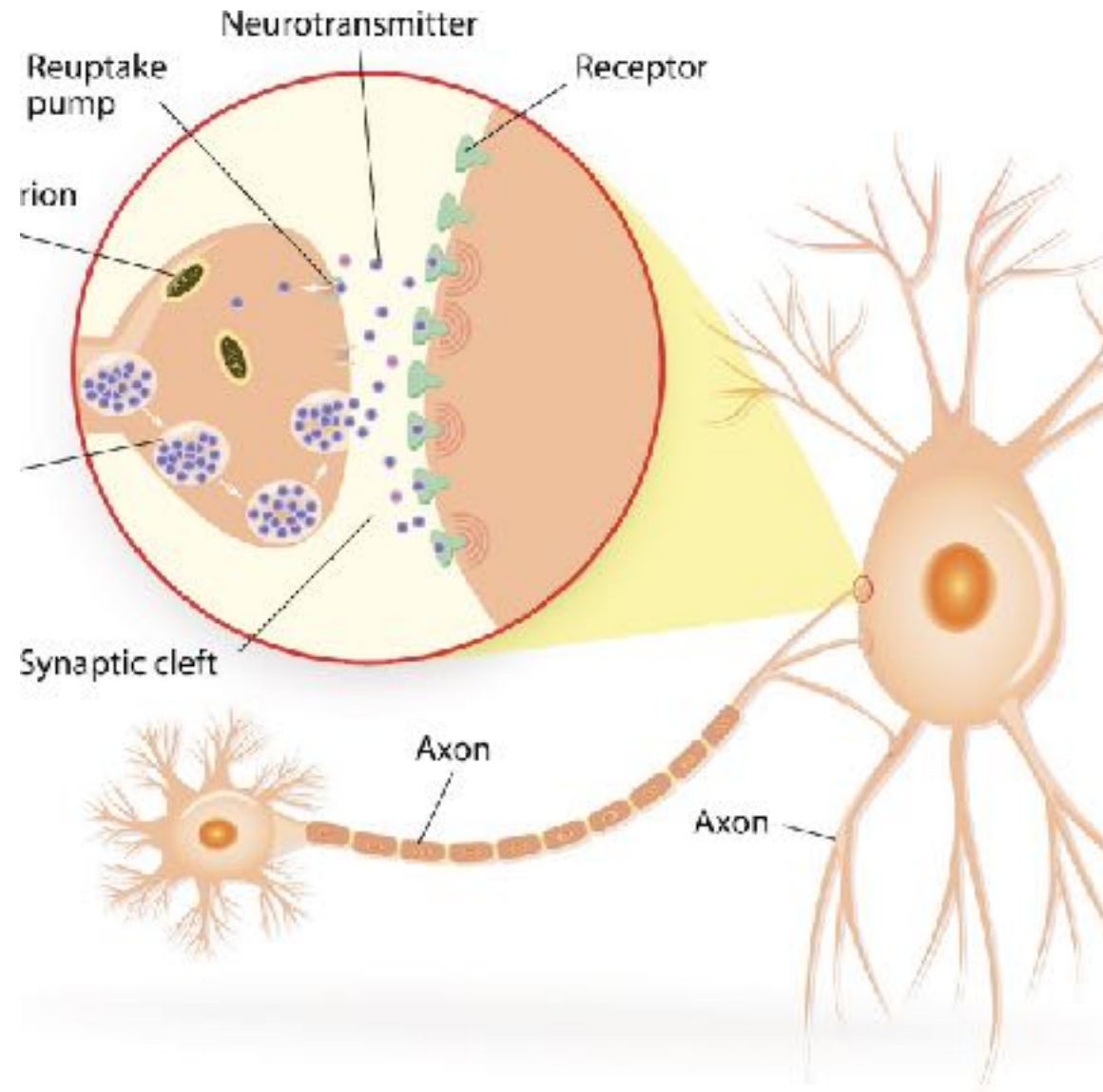


The Limbic System

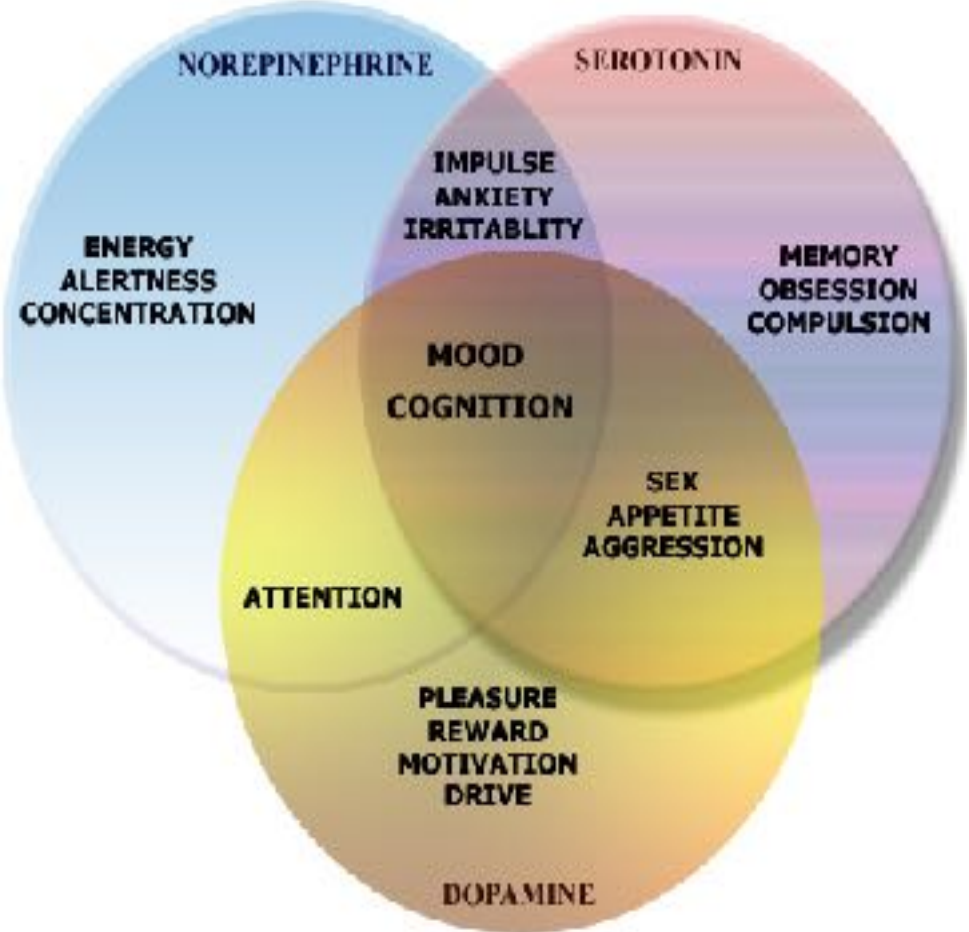
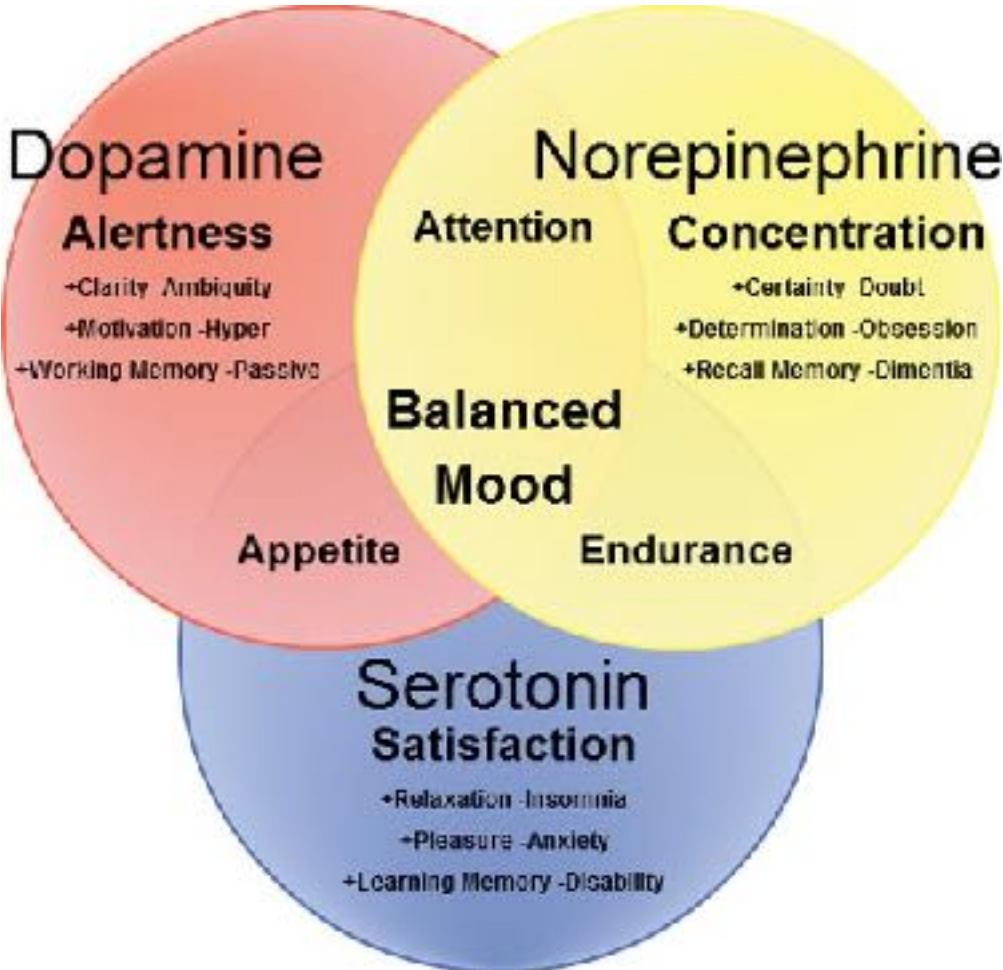


Davis M. The role of the amygdala in fear and anxiety. Ann Rev Neurosci 1992;15:356;

Neurotransmission



Serotonin Balance



How It May Impact Us

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on
- Feelings of feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Worsening of mental health conditions
- Increased use of alcohol and other substances



Who's At Risk?

- People who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (for example, older people, and people of any age with certain underlying medical conditions)
- Children and teens
- People caring for family members or loved ones
- Frontline workers such as health care providers and first responders
- Essential workers who work in the food industry
- People who have existing mental health conditions



Who's At Risk? (cont.)

- People who have lost their jobs, had their work hours reduced, or had other major changes to their employment
- People who have disabilities or developmental delay
- People who are socially isolated from others, including people who live alone, and people in rural or frontier areas
- People in some racial and ethnic minority groups
- People who use substances or have a substance use disorder



Prevalence (as of _____)

- 31% had some symptoms of depression and anxiety
- 26% symptoms of trauma and stress related disorder
- 13% started or increased substance use as means of coping
- 11% seriously considered suicide within the past 30 days



Suicide Warning Signs

- Mixed emotions, including relief.
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.
- Stress from the experience of having COVID-19 and monitoring yourself, or being monitored by others.
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have fears of getting the disease from you, even though you are cleared to be around others.
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties while you had COVID-19.
- Worry about getting re-infected or sick again even though you've already had COVID-19.
- Other emotional or mental health changes.



Suicide Warning Signs (cont.)

If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain



Suicide Warning Signs (cont.)

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for methods
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue



Suicide Warning Signs (cont.)

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation/Shame
- Agitation/Anger
- Relief/Sudden Improvement



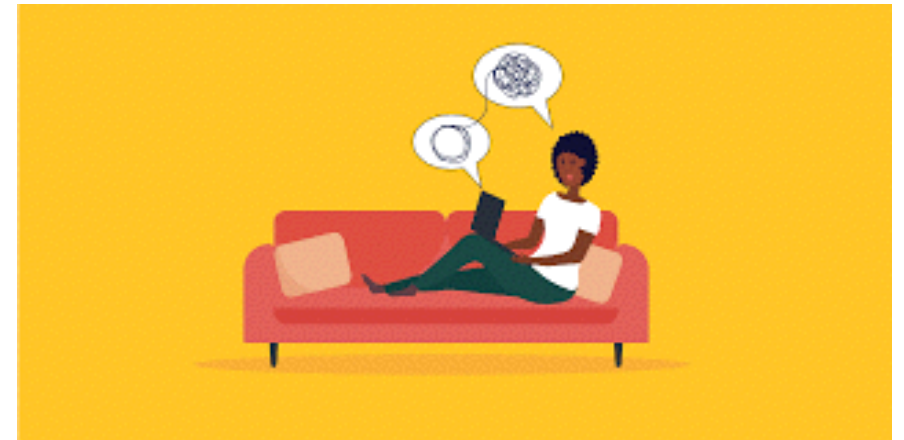
How To Cope

- **Take care of your body**– Try to eat healthy well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- **Connect with others**– Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships, and build a strong support system.
- **Take breaks**– Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Try taking in deep breaths. Try to do activities you usually enjoy.



How To Cope (cont.)

- **Stay informed**– When you feel that you are missing information, you may become more stressed or nervous.
- **Avoid too much exposure to news**– 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 **enjoyable activities** and return to normal life as much as possible and check for updates between breaks.



How To Cope (cont.)

- **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- **Connect with your community-** or faith-based organizations. While social distancing measures are in place, consider connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.



More Suggestions

- **Keep up daily routines**, and make changes only when necessary. Maintaining regular schedules and routines is a good way to keep anxiety at bay and feel normal.
- **Don't completely isolate yourself from other people.** Fear of spreading the disease can cause some people to withdraw socially, but maintaining relationships and social support are good ways to combat anxiety.
- **Limit screen time.** Too much time on the phone or computer, on social media or websites, can lead to less activity and more anxiety.
- **Practice gratitude** – focus on positives in your life through journaling or self reflection



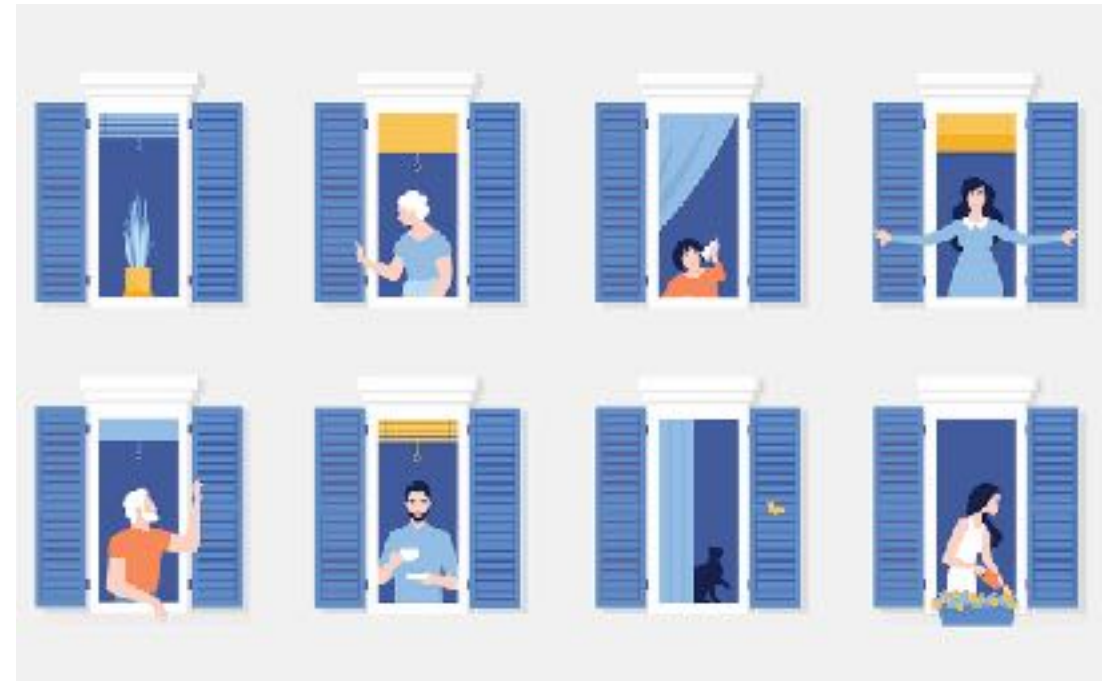
Self-Care

- Stay connected with loved ones through video calls, phone calls, texts, or social media.
- Remain informed with accurate information from trusted sources. Avoid social media accounts and news outlets that promote fear or rumors.
- Monitor your physical health needs and those of your loved ones. Eat healthy foods, and drink plenty of water.
- Unless you are showing signs of illness or have tested positive for COVID-19, going outside to exercise and walk pets is okay. In public, wear a cloth face covering and practice physical distancing by keeping 6 feet between you and others.
- Hold an image in your mind of the best possible outcome.
- Make a list of your personal strengths and use these to help both yourself and others stay emotionally strong.
- If you are religious or spiritual, follow practices at home that provide you with comfort and emotional strength.



How To Manage Stress

- **Reach out** to older adults or people with chronic health conditions and offer to help. For example, offer to pick up groceries, medications, and other essential supplies. Check in with them regularly over the phone.
- **Talk to your children** and explain why this is happening and how long it might last. Use language that is normal and consistent with how you usually communicate. Keep a schedule, set appropriate limits, and maintain usual rules when possible.
- **Take care of your pets**, which can be an essential part of your support system. Like people, pets react to changes in their environment and routine, so their behaviors may change, as well.
- **Show kindness to people** who may not have a support system or are isolated. There may be limits to what you can do in reaching out, but a little kindness may be just what someone needs.



Mindfulness Techniques

- Accept that you may not be as productive as always
 - Give yourself time to process, accept and adjust to the present situation.
- Set realistic goals and reward yourself
 - Use time spent doing enjoyable activities as reward for time spend working.
- Create boundaries and minimize distraction
 - Assign a space in the house for work. Turn off notifications on social apps and check email only on assigned times during the day.



Mindfulness Techniques (cont.)

- Connect with colleagues/friends/family
 - Do a virtual coffee break to catch-up
- Prioritize well being
 - Give yourself sufficient amount of time to rest between and after work sessions – practice self-care.
- Set work hours and stick to them
 - Disconnect at the end of a work-day to ensure you attend to other areas of your life



How To Get Help

- Seek professional help from a mental health provider: psychologist, psychiatrist, counselor, or therapist
- Utilize your health plan's resources
- Contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Consider virtual (online) resources for seeking help, i.e. telemedicine or telepsychiatry
- Consider mindfulness or meditation apps



Resources

- [Disaster Distress Helpline](#): 1-800-985-5990 (press 2 for Spanish), or text TalkWithUs for English or Hablanos for Spanish to 66746.
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English, 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish, or Lifeline Crisis Chat
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#): 1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22522
- [National Child Abuse Hotline](#): 1-800-4AChild (1-800-422-4453) or text 1-800-422-4453
- [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#): 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or Online Chat
- [The Eldercare Locator](#): 1-800-677-1116
- [Veteran's Crisis Line](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Crisis Chat or text: 8388255

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