

Managing Concerns and Emotions about COVID-19

News reports about the coronavirus, together with concerns that the virus could become more widespread, is raising a number of concerns and making many people worry. Here are some tips to help you put information and concerns in perspective, manage your worry, and maintain a positive outlook.

TIPS

- **Seek accurate information** and limit exposure to social media and news reports that provide no new information or inaccurate information. Here are some reliable sources of information:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
 - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- **Keep things in perspective.** Take a deep breath and stay focused on what the situation actually is, rather than the worst-case-scenario. It can be helpful to shift your focus to things within your control rather than things outside your control.
- **Acknowledge reactions.** Allow yourself time to reflect on what you are feeling and how you may be reacting to any fears and uncertainties.
- **Maintain your normal day-to-day activities and keep connected.** Resist withdrawing and isolating yourself. Maintaining social networks can foster a sense of normality and provide valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress. Feel free to share useful information you find on governmental websites with your friends and family. It will help them deal with their own worry. If your day to day activities are disrupted by multiple closings and cancellations, attempt to create structure in your day by: scheduling a normal bedtime and wake up time; structuring your time with hobbies, homework, reading, etc.; scheduling regular phone/video contact with friends and family.
- **Follow the prevention and protection tips given by medical professionals** such as the local/national medical authorities and your own medical doctor.
- **Practice calming rituals.** Stay grounded in the present moment, which can help you maintain an internal sense of stability and balance when outside events feel threatening.
- **Seek supports & use campus resources.** Reach out to friends and family and learn about on-campus and off-campus resources that are available. If you or someone you know has high distress that does not seem to be lessening, talk about it with others or contact Counseling Services. Your campus community is here to help!
- **Avoid stigmatizing or generalizing.** Remember to keep in mind the kindness and empathy with which we strive to treat one another at all times as we address this challenge together. Be aware if your behavior or attitudes change towards others from another country, and avoid stigmatizing anyone who is sick as potentially having the coronavirus. Often when there is uncertainty, our thoughts can become less compassionate and more fear-based.

RECOGNIZING DISTRESS - A SELF-CHECKLIST

- Increased worry, fear, and feelings of being overwhelmed

- Depressive symptoms that persist and/or intensify
- Inability to focus or concentrate accompanied by decreased academic or work performance or decreased performance of other daily activities
- Sleep difficulties
- Excessive crying
- Isolating or withdrawing from others (even via phone or video chat)
- Unhealthy coping (e.g., increased alcohol or drug use, engaging in risky/impulsive behaviors)
- A feeling of hopelessness and/or a paralyzing fear about the future
- Sudden anger or irritability, or noticeable changes in personality

SEEKING SUPPORT

It's not unusual to experience some — or even several — of the types of distress listed above during times of uncertainty and stress. If you notice these signs in yourself, reach out to family and friends for support and engage in your usual healthy coping strategies (e.g. moderate exercise; eating well; getting adequate sleep; practicing yoga, meditation, or some other mindfulness activity; take time for yourself; engage in a hobby or other fun activity, etc.).

If your distress continues or gets to the point that you are having difficulty managing your day-to-day activities, then seek professional help. You can reach NWU Counseling Services at counseling@nebrwesleyan.edu or at 402-465-2464.

National crisis hotlines and text services:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255

The Trevor Project (LGBTQ Suicide Hotline): 1-866-488-7386

Trans Lifeline: 1-877-565-8860

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

Crisis Text Line for Students of Color: Text STEVE to 741741