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Outbreaks Can be Stressful

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

• Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
• Changes in sleep or eating patterns
• Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
• Worsening of chronic health problems
• Worsening of mental health conditions
• Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
How Staying Home Impacts Mental Health

• Recent Poll Suggests: Nearly half (45%) of adults in the U.S. reported that their mental health has been negatively impacted due to worry and stress

• Changes to Schedule: lack of structure, lack of boundaries

• Distractions

• Social Isolation and Perceived Social Isolation (Loneliness)
  • Factors related to loneliness: male gender, physical health symptoms, chronic work or social stress, small social network, lack of spousal confidant
Social Isolation and Loneliness

• Loneliness associated with reduced life span, increased risk of mental and physical illness (Caspi et al., 2006)

• Loneliness increases attention to negative social stimuli (e.g. social threats, rejection, exclusion). (Cacioppo et al., 2006)

• Loneliness activates neural, neuroendocrine, and behavioral responses that promote short-term self-preservation (Cacioppo and Hawkley, 2009)
  • Leads to increases in anxiety, hostility, social withdrawal, as well as fragmented sleep, and altered gene expression and immunity

• Not dependent on the amount of time you spend alone rather on the chronicity of loneliness (Cacioppo et al., 2000)

• Loneliness manifests in different ways: anger, depression, anxiety, substance use
Managing Anxiety and Isolation During Quarantine

ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
10 TIPS TO REDUCE COVID-19 ANXIETY

- Focus on things you can control, such as your thoughts and behaviors.
- Control how often you check the latest news.
- Keep the big picture in mind. Humankind will survive this.
- Model peaceful behavior for those around you.
- Remember that the size of news coverage may not equal the size of a threat.
- Evaluate your own health behaviors and be a model for others, including children.
- Let wisdom and logic guide you.
- Feeling too isolated? Maintain digital connections with people.
- Turn to reputable sources for your news.
- Don’t let fear influence your decisions, such as hoarding supplies.
Improving Mental Health and Increasing Social Connection

- Exercise
- Breathing and grounding – go sit outside and do a listening mindfulness practice
- Allocate yourself a daily “worry” period.
- Start a gratitude or mindfulness practice: take a moment and find 3 things to be grateful for each day
- Treat Yourself e.g cook something nice or take a hot bath
- Remember that your Anxiety/Depression/Loneliness is normal and isn’t permanent
- Connect with loved ones and others who may be experiencing stress about the outbreak. Talk about your feelings and enjoy conversation unrelated to the outbreak.
- Engage in service activities: Call a coworker/friend and show up to listen, find a way to serve others

*Use telehealth as an option to talk to a professional if your anxiety becomes unmanageable. Contact your insurance company regarding providers who are engaged in telehealth.*
Employee Self-Care

Teleworking and Wellbeing Resources

- Ergonomic Telecommuting
- Virgin Pulse Resources/Tutorials
- Wellness Center and Physical Activity Resources
- Nutrition and Healthy Eating Resources
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources
LANL Mental Health Fitness Webpage

- LANL Mental Health Fitness Webpage
  - Dedicated mental health program focusing on personal wellbeing, safety, security
- Tykes to Teens: Resources for Navigating the COVID-19 Pandemic as a Family (pdf)
  - Guide on coronavirus anxiety, isolation, mental illness, grief support, and more
- Need to add some fun to your day while working from home with young kids? Occupational Health Psychologist, Alice Bodelson, PhD, shares playful activities for employees who are managing work-at-home tasks while caring for infants, toddlers, or preschoolers. See article here. (pdf)
- Virgin Pulse Whil Overview (pdf)
  - Whil is a digital tool available through the Virgin Pulse platform online or on a mobile app. Whil helps members feel calm, stay resilient, and live better than ever with mindfulness, yoga, and leadership training.
  - Quick Tips to Take Care of Your Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Pandemic (pdf)
- LANL Employee Assistance Program available to employees
  - The Employee Assistance Program is continuing to offer supportive services via the telephone throughout this difficult time. The EAP remains open from 7:30-5pm, M-F. If crisis services are necessary, or someone wants to talk after hours: NM Crisis and Accessline: 1-855-662-7474 (for crisis) or 1-855-466-7100 (warmline); Both are staffed by a licensed professional 24/7. The warmline is great if you just need someone to talk to and are not in crisis.
https://www.nmcrisisline.com/
https://www.nami.org/
https://www.crisistextline.org/
https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline
https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/
https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/
https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/depression/symptoms
References


