

MENTAL HEALTH & COVID-19

Coronavirus has had an impact on our daily activities and responsibilities and on our ability to see and spend time with loved ones and friends. Each of these things have the potential to impact our physical and mental health in small and large ways. Below are some ways that the current situation surrounding coronavirus can impact our mental health and what we can do to support our mental health.

WHAT TO EXPECT?



Fear and anxiety

You may feel anxious or worried about yourself or your family members contracting COVID-19. It's also normal to have worries about getting food, questions about employment, or financial concerns. Some people may have trouble sleeping or focusing on daily responsibilities like completing online school work.



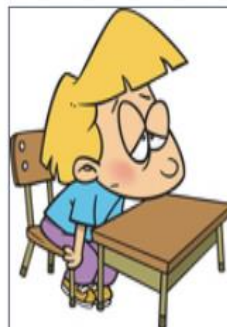
Sadness and loneliness

You may feel sad about not being able to see your family, friends, or other members of your community. Not being able to engage in meaningful activities interrupts your daily routine and may result in feelings of sadness or low mood. Extended periods of time spent at home can also cause feelings of loneliness, which sometimes means people think they don't have anyone to talk to.



Anger, frustration or irritability

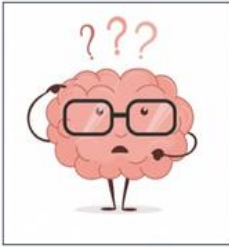
Feeling isolated and losing the ability to engage in activities you enjoy can often feel frustrating. You may also experience anger or resentment toward COVID-19 or toward those who have issued quarantine or isolation orders in your community and beyond.



Boredom or restlessness

Spending so much time isolated and away from your friends and daily activities can increase boredom. Your body and mind may feel restlessness which sometimes look like your body not being able to stay still or your mind having lots of thoughts about current situation or other things in your life. You may also have difficulty engaging even in the activities that you once enjoyed such as watching YouTube, listening to music, and reading.

WHAT CAN WE DO?



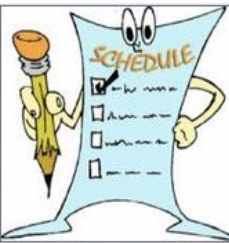
Focus on what you can control

You can't control COVID-19 itself or what will happen in the future. You also can't magically control your feelings, like fear and anxiety about COVID-19. But you can control what you do. This includes some of the strategies shared below as well as promoting social distancing and taking good care of your hygiene (washing your hands, not touching your face) and health (sleeping, eating, exercising).



Limit news consumption

It's important to obtain accurate and timely public health information regarding COVID-19, but too much exposure to media coverage of the virus can lead to increased feelings of fear and anxiety. Balancing time spent on news and social media with other activities unrelated to quarantine or isolation, such as reading, listening to music, or talking with friends can be helpful.



Create and follow routines and schedule

Maintaining a daily routine can help us keep a sense of order and purpose in our lives despite the unfamiliarity of isolation and quarantine. Try to include regular daily activities, such as waking up at your regular time, taking a shower, logging in to do your online class work at a particular time, eating lunch at your usual time, etc. Follow the daily school plan as if you were at school.



Stay virtually connected with others

Your face-to-face interactions may be limited, but using phone calls, text messages, video chat and social media to access social support networks is a great way to stay connected. If you're feeling sad or anxious, use these conversations as an opportunity to discuss your experience and feelings. Reach out to family, friends, and/or your school community for support.



Engage in activities you enjoy

Even though you may not be able to go outside and spend time with your friends and family the way you used to, you can get creative in how you enjoy activities inside. Here are some activities you can enjoy inside- cooking, listening to music, making art, watching your favorite show or sport, exercise like push ups, sit ups, or even running in place, reading, playing a video game or a board game, working on a puzzle, listening to a podcast, downloading a relaxation app in your phone, and calling a family member or friend.

Emergency Contact Information:

Local Emergency Line: 911

Boston Emergency Services Team: 1-800-981-4357

National Suicide Prevention Line: 1-800-273-8255 Youthline: Text teen2teen to 839853

**Resources collected from APA, NASP, and Harris (2019)