

Mental health and COVID-19: Help when you're feeling worried

Easy read: Information for people with developmental disabilities and their families

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus, like a cold or flu. Some people may not know they have it at all. Other people might have a fever or a cough, or a hard time breathing. They may feel weak in their muscles. For some people, COVID-19 can be very dangerous.

The COVID-19 pandemic can make people feel stressed. We can't do the things we usually do, like go to work, go to a sport practice, or see our friends or family.

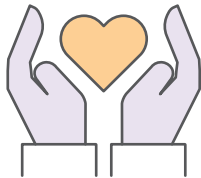
When we get too stressed, it can be hard to think straight and get things done. It is good to find ways to deal with stress, so it doesn't get too big.

What has worked for you before when you were stressed? Try doing some of those same things now.

Tips to help when you're feeling worried

Be kind to yourself

This is a scary time. Everybody is feeling some fear or anxiety. That is okay.



Get the facts

Make sure you get information that is true and easy to understand. Don't believe everything you hear. It might be wrong.



Stay balanced

Stay informed, but know when you need to take a break from news.



Find out what COVID-19 means for you

Find out how dangerous it is for you to get this virus. If you have health problems already or you are older, you might want to be extra careful and stay inside.



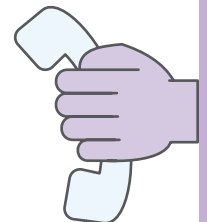
Take one step at a time

There will be some difficulties along the way. Try to solve them one step at a time. Get someone you trust to help you.



Call someone

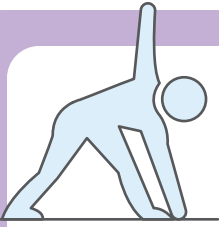
Is there a friend, family member or helper who can help you with your stress or worry?



This information sheet is not a screening tool for COVID-19 symptoms, or a resource for if you are having a mental health crisis. If you are in crisis, please call 911 right away or go to your nearest emergency department.

For more information, visit www.camh.ca/covid19

Don't forget to take care of yourself



Remember to exercise and stay active. For ideas on how to do this at home, see these links:

- <https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/fitness/fit-5-page>
- <https://www.specialolympics.org/school-of-strength>

Practise relaxation or meditation:
Here is a link to online groups:

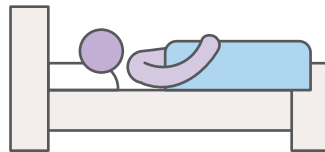
- <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mindfulness-monday-tickets-100432038932>



Make sure you are eating healthy foods.



Get proper rest and sleep.



Stay away from alcohol and other drugs.



I still can't cope. Now what?

Sometimes you may try the things in the list, but still feel very anxious. Try talking with someone like a doctor or social worker. Even if you can't go to see your doctor, you may be able to meet with them on the phone.

How can I help somebody who is feeling scared about COVID-19?

Maybe the person is angry about what is happening, or they may be trying to fix the problem. It is hard when a problem is this big and you can't fix it or make it go away. Try to just listen to the person.

Here are some ideas:

- Watch or read something together that explains what is happening.
- Ask: How can I help?
- Check in regularly. Maybe call every day at a certain time.
- Let them know that you are there to listen, and they can call you.

Remember that it can be hard to talk to someone who is very scared or angry. It is really helpful to listen – but what if it starts to make *you* feel scared, upset or angry? You might need to do some listening, but also take some breaks. It is good to sometimes be a helper, and sometimes take care of yourself too.