

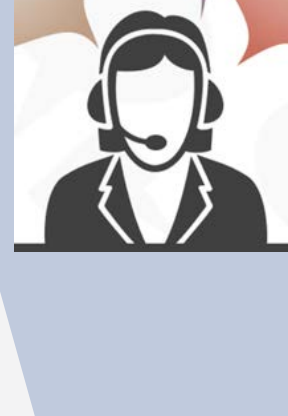
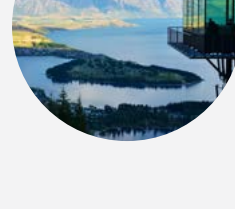
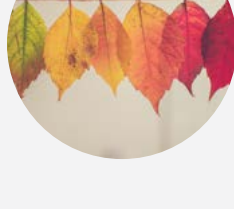
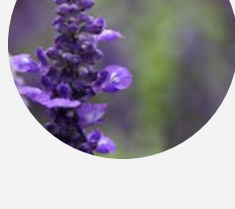
Living, Working, and Staying Healthy

Tips for working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic

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CHALLENGES

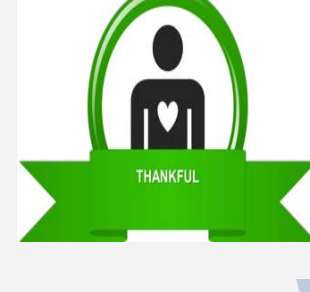
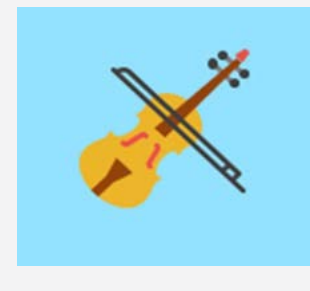
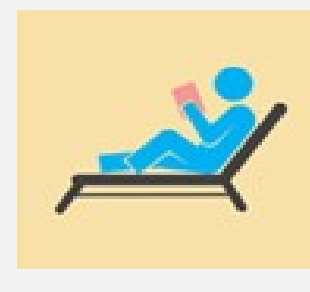
Even if you are an experienced remote worker, working from home during the pandemic may feel different. Perhaps you are dealing with children or other family members that require attention. They may feel frustrated, restless, or lonely. Or, perhaps you are worried about the health of your loved ones, friends, and yourself. Perhaps someone you know has been diagnosed with COVID-19. It is natural to feel increased stress, anxiety, and worry during this pandemic. Of course, everyone reacts differently, and our feelings will no doubt change over time. In the following, we provide a few tips for your consideration.



TIPS FOR LIVING WELL

Physical distancing can be a challenging, especially if we live alone. Most humans want physical company and even have the need to occasionally have physical contact. Now is the time to practice self-care strategies.

- **Take care of your body.** Eat healthy, exercise, and get plenty of sleep.
- **Connect with others.** Maintain healthy relations. Have video chats. Ask others how they are feeling. Give yourself permission to share your feelings, and listen without judgement to others. Check-in with colleagues, family, and friends regularly.
- **Take breaks.** Try taking deep breaths. Take breaks from the news and social media. Take time to unwind and relax. You may want to try a meditation or mindfulness app. Perhaps you'd like to just sit back, close your eyes, and listen to your favorite music or the soothing sounds of nature. Is there a book you've been wanting to read?
- **Develop a well-being plan.** You may want to keep a journal, or use an app, to track your progress.
- **Stick to routines or start new ones.** For example, get up and get dressed as usual.
- **Engage in hobbies.** Do you have some favorite hobbies? How about an indoor hobby you've been wanting to do or learn?
- **Challenge yourself.** Would you like to learn something new? Perhaps you'd like to learn how to play a musical instrument? What about drawing or painting? Perhaps you'd like to upgrade your professional knowledge. There are many opportunities to audit courses for free, or challenge yourself even further and pursue a professional certificate or degree.
- **Set up a worry window.** Write down all your worries, and then give yourself permission to think about them during a *specific time* of the day.
- **Gratitude.** Try keeping a gratitude journal. Write down and remind yourself of the things you are grateful for.

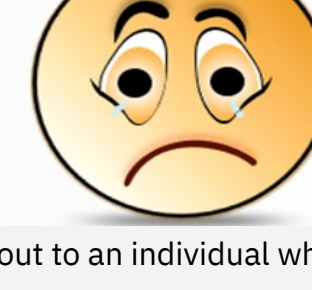
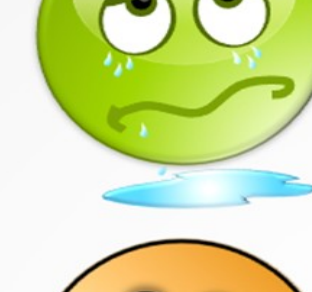
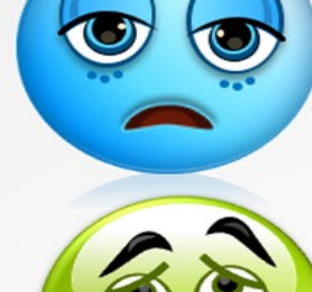


WARNING SIGNS FOR EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

It's common to feel stress during the pandemic. However, for some people these feelings may develop into distress, or negative stress, which can lead to mental and physical problems. In adults, keep an eye out for:

Warning Signs

- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety or fear.
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images.
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Anger or short-temper.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- Crying spells.
- Losing interest in daily activities.
- Fatigue.
- Feeling guilty, helpless, or hopeless.



If you or a loved one are experiencing one or more of the above, reach out to an individual whose guidance you trust, consult with a professional therapist, doctor, and/or seek spiritual guidance, if you are part of a faith community.

Managing Your Brain during the Pandemic

Avoid Catastrophizing

Catastrophizing is a pattern of thinking that jumps to worst case scenarios, which leads to poor decision-making.

Stick to the Facts

Evaluate and consider what you know to be true.

Don't Underestimate your Ability to Cope

Avoid exaggerating the severity of the threat and underestimates your ability to cope.

Avoid All-or-Nothing Thinking

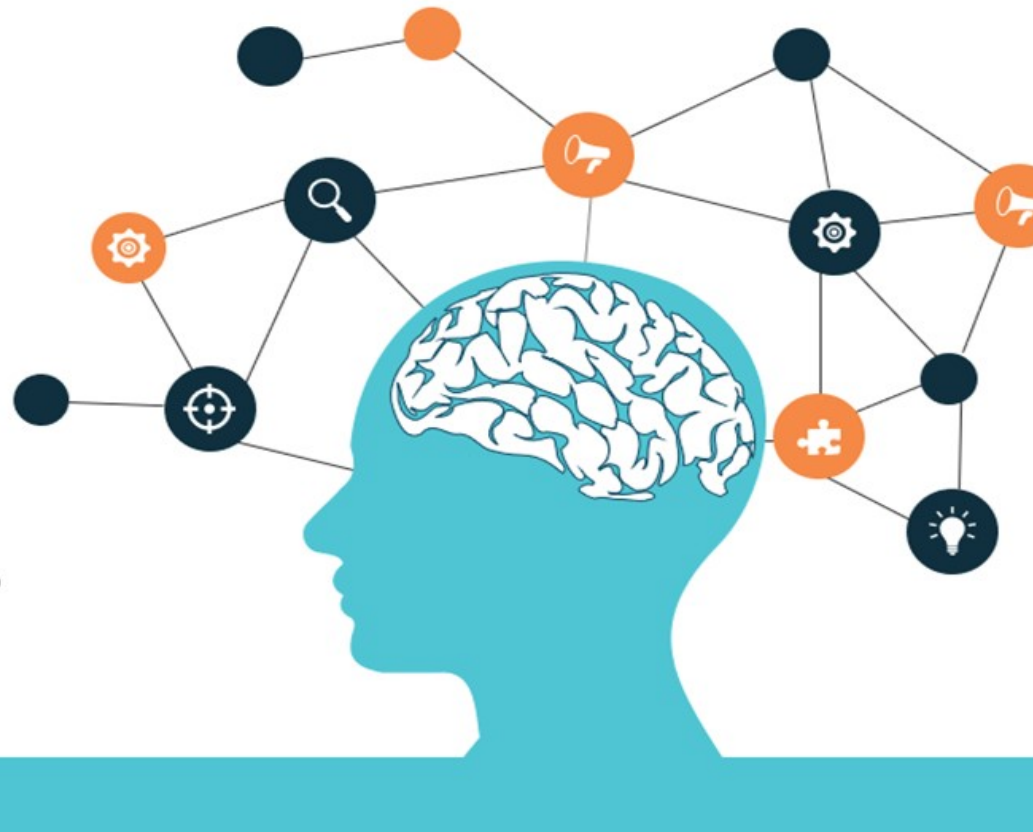
Give the circumstances nuance.

Accept the Unknown

Giving up control is difficult. Accept uncertainty during the pandemic by relinquishing control and trusting that experts around the world are working to safeguard us.

Stay Informed

Choose news media outlets that rely on scientific insights, inform viewers with experts, and prioritize facts over sensationalism and emotional affect.



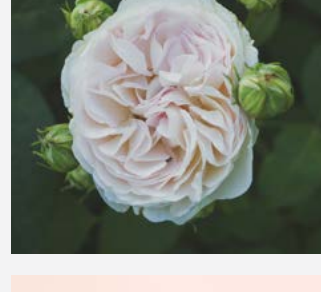
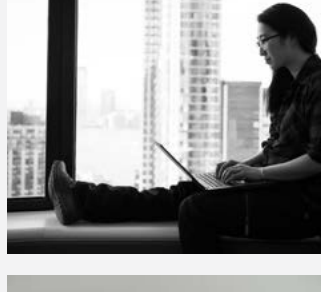
Supporting Each Other

To support each other during this pandemic, consider:

- Checking in regularly with colleagues, using video chat whenever possible, especially for those who are alone.
- Be calm when interacting with others.
- Use active listening strategies when engaging with others, such as avoiding multi-tasking when engaging with your colleague; clear your mind and focus entirely on what the other person is saying.
- Demonstrate empathy.
- Recognize the uncertainty and anxiety your colleagues may be experiencing.
- Slow down when reacting to other people. Take a breath before answering.
- Be a role-model for others.
- When colleagues are overly pessimistic, be optimistic about the situation, even if it means internally arguing against yourself by imagining the least catastrophic interpretation.
- Organize an occasional virtual "happy hour." Using video chat, invite everyone to eat the same food together. Perhaps you have a favorite dessert or party food you'd like to suggest to everyone would enjoy. During this time, avoid talking about stressful topics. Just enjoy each other's company.

Stay Healthy

Perhaps you'd agree that the pandemic has clearly demonstrated that no matter where we live, we are all connected. Staying healthy is everyone's business. "I take care of myself; you take care of yourself; we take care of each other."



Resources:

- <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare.asp>
- <https://www.apa.org/news/apa/2020/03/newly-remote-workers>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/warning-signs-risk-factors>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/coping-tips>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/23/smarter-living/coronavirus-coping-tips.html>
- <https://www.npr.org/2020/03/16/816400691/panic-in-the-street-how-psychology-shaped-the-response-to-an-epidemic>
- <https://www.npr.org/2020/02/03/802347757/a-conversation-with-tara-brach-mindfulness-tools-for-big-feelings>
- <https://www.apa.org/news/guides/2020/03/covid-19-leadership>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/guides/smarterliving/be-a-better-listener>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/smarter-living/how-to-be-more-optimistic.html>