

10 Tips for Dealing with Difficult Emotions During COVID-19



It's normal when facing an unprecedented situation with rapidly changing information, to experience many different and often strong feelings. **You are not alone.**

1. Our minds naturally tend to go off into the future, often to worst-case scenarios. It can be helpful to make it a practice to return again and again to the present moment. Some find it helpful to use reminder phrases such as, "Right now, I'm OK," or "Be where my feet are."
2. You can apply tip #1, to handwashing! When you notice your mind's gone to fear or worry, come back to the temperature of the water and the physical feeling of your hands touching each other.
3. Put a hand on your abdomen and just feel the movement of your breath, for a few breaths.
4. When indoors, look out a window whenever you have a chance. If you can, take a walk outdoors. Notice the new growth of spring.
5. There's what we need to know, and there's all the "extra." Limit the amount of time you spend paying attention to "extra" which tends to heighten any feelings of fear and anxiety.
6. Take a couple moments to slowly stretch, whether your arms, neck, feet, etc. Compare how the side you just stretched for 30 seconds feels to the side you haven't yet, and you might notice how much difference just one stretch can make!
7. Just when we might most be needing human contact, we're being asked to protect ourselves and each other by limiting it in different ways. So focus on how you CAN make human contact: real eye contact, smiles, caring emails or texts, phone calls or face time. If you live alone, consider setting up a "buddy schedule" to ensure at least one outside-work contact per day.
8. Consider replacing the term "social distancing" with either "social caring" or "mutually protecting" and notice any difference that makes.
9. Many of us are grappling with very difficult questions and issues we've never faced before. We'll all likely have moments when we're not at our best, to say the least. It's helpful to remember that our loved ones and those we work with (if we're still working) are all doing their best. Quick apologies, understanding and forgiveness go a long way, both for ourselves and others.
10. Give thought to some new ways you can express kindness (that don't need physical contact) and do at least one of them, each day.