

TIP SHEET: DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTY DURING COVID-19

It has been said that change is the only constant in life. The uncertainty that change creates is also natural, and something you may be feeling more often during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Facing the unknown can seem overwhelming; it may feel as if the things you cannot control are consuming you. The goal is to not become lost in the uncertainty. Instead, focus on getting through each day and beginning to trust that the rest will work itself out in time.

WAYS OF COPING WITH UNCERTAINTY

Dealing with uncertainty may seem difficult, but there are helpful ways to cope during this unprecedented time.

STOP EXPECTING AND START PLANNING

When the future is unsure, setting expectations can make it easy to experience repeated disappointment. Although you know what you want to have happen, in truth there is little control over what tomorrow brings. That's no reason to stop making plans and setting goals but you should also acknowledge that they may not be met on the timeline or in the fashion you expect. Rather than envisioning specific steps and a perfect outcome, focus on what you can do right now. Prepare for multiple scenarios. Do everything that you can to achieve your desired results but realize that things change.

FOCUS ON THINGS THAT ARE WITHIN YOUR CONTROL

Your attitude during uncertainty is one aspect over which you do have control. Put your concentration into staying positive. Circumstances won't change in an instant; it may take days or even months. Remind yourself that you will be okay no matter what. Recognizing and accepting the situation as it is means you can start looking for the good things that change may bring.

LEARN STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Emotions like stress, anxiety and fear take a toll on your emotional and physical wellbeing. Intense feelings can wear you down very quickly and directly affect your body, from blood pressure to cholesterol levels. Stress relief techniques are good tools you can use to relax, regroup and rethink your strategy.

The list below offers just a few of many activities that offer stress relief:

- Taking a walk
- Going for a drive
- Talking with a friend
- Reading a book
- Listening to music
- Watching a movie
- Enjoying a bath
- Practicing yoga
- Meditating

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DEEP BREATHING FOR BEGINNERS

If you only have a few minutes, simply take a moment to be alone. Stop and breathe, clear your mind for a few seconds, and then try seeing things from a perspective of clarity. Basic deep breathing doesn't take long – and it's a great way to de-stress.

HOW TO DO IT

- Sit or lie down.
- Slowly count to four while you breathe in through your nose. Hold your breath for a second.
- Count to four again, this time while breathing out slowly through your mouth.
- Repeat a few times, or for as long as you'd like.