

## **Anxiety Workshop Resource Guide**

### **Media distancing**

- Social distancing helps to stop the spread of COVID-19, distancing yourself from social media will help decrease your anxiety. Anxiety can stem from uncertainty and an active imagination which produces catastrophic thoughts. The media, which is 24/7 Coronavirus and virtually all negative, is often the driver of those thoughts.

### **Don't Engage with Worry**

- Take Action: Whether you are worried about contracting the virus, your struggling business, or being unemployed, the more your mind focuses on worst-case scenarios, the more anxious you feel. You can't stop thoughts from entering your mind, but you can choose to stop dwelling and you can choose to take action to solve problems. There is a huge difference between worrying and problem solving.
  - Try the DBT skill of thought diffusion, where you will learn to use imagery to envision your thoughts and then imagine them coming and going. The link below provides an explanation, a video and a few exercises.
    - <https://dialecticalbehaviortherapy.com/mindfulness/thought-defusion/>

### **Focus on Being Productive and New Ways of Enjoying Life**

- Although we have no control over the national crisis, we must focus on where we do have control – our response to the crisis. This is an opportunity to try something new and do things we haven't had time for. Organize a messy room, paint a fence, clean the garage, edit the photos on your phone, clean a rusty bike and take it for a ride, and play a board game — remember those? You can also learn a new skill or start a new hobby from videos on YouTube or various apps and websites.
  - <https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/life/how-to-use-covid-19-quarantine-to-get-organized/97-505c0b52-0bb2-4970-818e-a0fff7bd20b8>
  - <https://wjla.com/news/offbeat/theres-never-been-a-better-time-to-pick-up-a-new-hobby>

### **Engage in Stress Reduction Activities**

- Focusing on what you are grateful for, exercising your body, and relaxing your mind will help give you the peace you desire. Guided meditation, yoga, exercise, and a gratitude journal are all practices that lower stress. Select one or two, learn about them so you do them correctly, and practice each day.
  - Several ebook and audio book companies are offering free books and subscription periods. (Scribed, Audible, Kindle)
  - Many gyms, exercise and yoga companies are offering free subscriptions and online classes.
    - Yoga: Core Power Yoga, DoYogaWithMe, Down Dog, Alo Moves, Bulldog Yoga
    - Workouts: Golds Gym, Planet Fitness, Daily Burn, Echelon, Peloton, Fitness Blender, obe Fitness, Fhitting Room, Fit Body, Redeem Fitness
  - <https://www.conncoll.edu/media/website-media/campuslife/Journaling-to-Cope-with-the-COVID-19-Pandemic.pdf>

### **Meditation**

- Popular meditation apps Calm and Headspace have both released free digital offerings to help the public cope with anxiety and panic.
  - Calm has created an online hub with content including sleep stories, meditations, music and mindful movement. They also plan to livestream anxiety-reducing meditations.

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- Headspace has unlocked a specially-curated collection of meditation and mindfulness content, called Weathering the Storm, available in several languages. They also have a contract with New York State to provide free services. <https://www.headspace.com/ny>
- Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ua9bOsZTYg>
- 478 Paced Breathing Exercise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gz4G31LGyog>
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation Resource: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheHonestGuys/search?query=progressive+muscle>

### **Preserve Some Sense of Normalcy**

- To the extent you can, maintain your day as you normally do with modifications. Be creative. Instead of exercising at the gym, workout inside your home or in your neighborhood. Have a dinner with friends over a video chat platform and watch the same movie at the same time with a sync-watching app. Attend a live religious service online. Maintaining a structure to your day and some semblance of normalcy will help reduce anxiety.

### **Regulate Sleep**

- With such unprecedented changes coming on so quickly, it's understandable that the importance of sleep is flying under the radar. But as we adjust to stay-at-home orders and try to remain healthy in a time of COVID-19, focusing on sleeping well offers tremendous benefits. Sleep is critical to physical health and effective functioning of the immune system. It's also a key promoter of emotional wellness and mental health, helping to beat back stress, depression, and anxiety.
  - <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-guidelines-covid-19-isolation>

### **Reframe "I am stuck inside" to "I can finally focus on my home and myself"**

- As dismal as the world may feel right now, think of the mandated work-from-home policy as an opportunity to refocus your attention from the external to the internal. Doing one productive thing per day can lead to a more positive attitude. Set your sights on long-avoided tasks, reorganize, or create something you've always wanted to. Approaching this time with a mindset of feeling trapped or stuck will only stress you out more. This is your chance to slow down and focus on yourself.
  - <https://beckinstitute.org/using-cbt-to-respond-to-covid-19/>
  - <https://futuresrecoveryhealthcare.com/knowledge-center/walking-the-middle-path/>

### **A chaotic home can lead to a chaotic mind**

- With all the uncertainty happening outside your home, keep the inside organized, predictable and clean. Setting up mental zones for daily activities can be helpful to organize your day. For example, try not to eat in bed or work on the sofa- just as before, eat at the kitchen table and work at your desk. Loosening these boundaries just muddles your routine and can make the day feel very long. Additionally, a cluttered home can cause you to become uneasy and claustrophobic of your environment- so keep it tidy.
  - <https://www.wired.com/story/how-to-work-from-home-without-losing-your-mind/>

### **Get out in nature, if possible**

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- Sunshine and fresh air will do you good. Even a walk around your neighborhood can make you feel better. Just be sure to avoid crowds, keep your distance from people you encounter, and obey restrictions in your area.
  - <https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/coronavirus-outside-nature-safety-philadelphia-20200320.html>

### **Take up a relaxation practice**

- When stressors throw your nervous system out of balance, relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and yoga can bring you back into a state of equilibrium. Regular practice delivers the greatest benefits, so see if you can set aside even a little time every day.
  - <https://www.latimes.com/lifestyle/story/2020-03-24/meditation-tips-coronavirus-crisis>

### **Maintain Normal Eating Patterns**

- For many of us, a day stuck at home is an excuse to overindulge in junk food. Others skip meals altogether. However, eating right can increase our energy levels and motivation. You may feel less hungry if you are getting less exercise, but monitor you're eating habits to ensure that you maintain the proper balance of nutrition. Limit high-sugar, high-fat snacks and drink plenty of water.
  - <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/eating-during-covid-19-improve-your-mood-and-lower-stress-2020040719409>
  - <https://www.uab.edu/news/youcanuse/item/11193-eating-right-and-eating-smart-during-covid-19>

### **Be Creative with How You Pass the Time**

- This article has several unique ideas on how to continue exploring the world around you and enrich your mind through the safety of your home. <https://www.healthline.com/health/9-resources-for-coping-with-coronavirus-anxiety#The-takeaway>

### **Maintain Hope and Support Others**

- Trying to maintain a hopeful attitude can be difficult during a time of extreme uncertainty such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. Here are a few ways to try to maintain that positivity, especially through helping and supporting those around you.
  - <https://scrubbing.in/maintaining-hope-during-covid-19-social-distancing/>
  - <http://health.sunnybrook.ca/covid-19-coronavirus/finding-hope/>

### **Ways to connect with Friends**

- The need to connect with others is at the core of our being. We recognize that virtual communication isn't always ideal. Especially when depression and anxiety are involved, you might not feel up to doing a Zoom call or texting you peers. Here is a few idea of other ways to connect with others virtually.
  - <https://sea.mashable.com/culture/9721/coronavirus-got-you-stuck-at-home-have-fun-with-friends-online-with-these-6-cool-activities>

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- [https://www.reddit.com/r/LongDistance/comments/jvmr6/rlongdistances\\_list\\_of\\_things\\_to\\_do\\_together\\_over/](https://www.reddit.com/r/LongDistance/comments/jvmr6/rlongdistances_list_of_things_to_do_together_over/)

### **Dealing with your emotions**

- Here are few ideas on how to manage difficult emotions and strategies for allowing them to work in your best interest.
  - <https://www.uab.edu/news/health/item/11204-making-your-emotions-work-for-you-and-against-covid-19>

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### **Resources:**

<https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/top-ten-covid-19-anxiety-reduction-strategies>

<https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/covid-19-lockdown-guide-how-manage-anxiety-and>

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/coronavirus-anxiety.htm>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/cabin-fever-fear-of-isolation-2671734>

<https://www.bustle.com/p/24-free-livestream-workouts-at-home-workout-app-trials-22628328>

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