

Tips to manage mental health through COVID-19

March 20, 2020

In the wake of COVID-19, Canadians are facing a new reality of social distancing, self-quarantining and isolation in order to protect public health and safety. These new circumstances may lead individuals with mental health concerns into heightened symptoms of anxiety and depression.

In what may be a difficult time for many, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is offering some basic tips to help people remain calm and balanced as this public health situation unfolds.

- Considering the level of attention and seriousness being paid to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's normal to feel anxious. Try not to avoid, ignore or suppress anxious thoughts. Instead, be aware of your anxiety and accept that you're feeling anxious in this situation. Try to keep things in perspective; notice and challenge your thoughts that may be extreme or unhelpful.
- Self-care is critically important at this time, as worries can be made worse if we aren't taking care of ourselves. Lean on social supports, try to get enough sleep, eat healthy, exercise and engage in enjoyable activities. Do the things you would typically do to support your health, and be sure to use caution and follow health and safety guidelines while doing them.
- Seek information from reliable news sources only. Limit checking in on the latest news to short, defined periods, and refrain from setting related push notifications on your device. Appropriate information consumption may be calming and can lessen the sense of danger.
- Take the recommended precautions as outlined by Health Canada and other credible health agencies. Remain focused on the factors within your control, such as washing hands, covering your mouth during coughs and sneezes, avoiding non-essential travel, etc.
- If you're noticing that your symptoms of anxiety (in association with COVID-19 or otherwise) are causing you significant distress or are interfering with your ability to function normally, reach out for formal mental health supports from a recognized agency, such as CMHA.

If you require mental health and/or addiction information, support or are in crisis, please call **REACH OUT at 519-433-2023 / 1-866-933-2023**.

If you require immediate mental health crisis support, our **Crisis Centre at 648 Huron Street, London is open 24/7**. To ensure the health and safety of everyone, you will be pre-screened for COVID-19 symptoms prior to receiving services.

CMHA Ontario and branches around the province provide programs and services to support your mental wellness, such as [BounceBack](#), crisis services, information on stress management, and much more. Learn more and find a local branch at ontario.cmha.ca.