Mental Health and COVID-19

People around the world are making significant adjustments in their lives to slow the spread of COVID-19, the novel coronavirus. Before the coronavirus, we engaged in various routines such as work, attending school, spending time with loved ones, and attending worship services. Now, suddenly, our lives and the world around us have been radically changed because of the worries and hardships brought on by the coronavirus. To reduce the spread of the coronavirus, we find ourselves quarantined at home and isolated from family and friends. News about the spread of the virus are unwavering, fast-paced, and appear to be ever-changing and endless.

It is likely that since information about the novel coronavirus came to light, a range of emotions have surfaced – including sadness, anxiety, grief, fear, anger, loneliness, pessimism, and even moments of depression. Please know that in this regard, we are not alone in experiencing emotional distress. The concern of most mental health professionals is that these emotional reactions to COVID-19 could become part of the new normal if not dealt with properly.

Therefore, it is paramount that these emotional reactions be effectively managed. There are tools and strategies available that would allow us to learn how to manage these emotions, therefore lessening our level of emotional distress. Some tools and strategies are listed next.

For Careful Consideration:

1. Consider keeping a diary. While journaling, write down your thoughts and feelings. Structure a time to make entries into your journal. Limit the time spent recording entries into your journal to no more than an hour each day.
2. Be open to understanding the emotions that you are experiencing. Be honest with yourself! If you experience prolonged difficulties in your ability to concentrate, sleep, or in carrying out your day-to-day responsibilities, then seek professional help.
3. Strive to gain further insights about your actions, thoughts, and feelings — thus engage in self-care activities to ensure that you strengthen supportive relationships, receive quality sleep, and proper nutrition.

Strategies and Techniques

Listed below are evidenced-based techniques that when perfected through practice and training will allow you to remain balanced, improve your sleep, decrease your level of stress, and regulate your mood, your thoughts, your behaviors, and your emotional reactions:

- Practice deep breathing techniques at least twice per day
- Learn to practice meditation, yoga or pilates
- Employ mindfulness techniques which improve self-awareness and self-efficacy
- Start an exercise routine lasting about 30 minutes for 2 to 3 times per week
- Consider starting or joining a support group
- Get at least 8 hours of sleep

The Anderson Center offers evidence-based treatments designed to reduce stress and to improve your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. If you would like more information about the Anderson Center for Health Wellness and Contemplative Thought, please email: Dr.Anderson@TheAndersonCenter.com

Additional Resources:

- APA COVID-19 Information and Resources: https://www.APA.org/topics/COVID-19

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