Looking After Your Mental Health During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

Introduction

Acacia EAP recognises and understands the feelings of anxiety, distress and concern many people may be experiencing in relation to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and offers the following wellbeing advice.

Try to maintain perspective

While it is reasonable for people to be concerned about the outbreak of coronavirus, try to remember that medical, scientific and public health experts around the world are working hard to contain the virus, treat those affected and develop a vaccine as quickly as possible.

Find a healthy balance in relation to media coverage

Being exposed to large volumes of negative information can heighten feelings of anxiety. While it's important to stay informed, you may find it useful to limit your media intake if it is upsetting you or your family.

Access good quality information

It's important to get accurate information from credible sources such as those listed below. This will also help you maintain perspective and feel more in control.
- World Health Organization – coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak
- Australian Government coronavirus (COVID-19) health alert
- smartraveller.gov.au – travel information for Australian citizens

Try to maintain a practical and calm approach

Widespread panic can complicate efforts to manage the outbreak effectively. Do your best to stay calm and follow official advice, particularly around observing good hygiene habits.

The Australian Psychological Society has advice about maintaining positive mental health during the outbreak.

Try not to make assumptions

To contribute to a sense of community wellbeing, try to remember that the coronavirus can affect anyone regardless of their nationality or ethnicity.

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Symptoms of stress

Symptoms of stress in response to an infectious disease outbreak could include:
- Changes in sleeping and eating patterns
- Obsessive thinking about the coronavirus and it's potential impact
- Fear and worry about contracting the virus
- Fear and worry about the health of loved ones, including those at higher risk (elderly).
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased use of alcohol or other drugs

Taking care of yourself

It is important to
- Take breaks from watching the news stories, particularly those shared on social media
- Rely only on reputable sources to obtain current and up-to-date information on the outbreak.
- Look after yourself physically – exercise regularly and eat a well-balanced diet
- Ensure you are practicing good sleep hygiene
- Unwind by doing activities you enjoy
- Remain socially connected, especially during self-isolation.
- Where possible, it can help to maintain normal routines.

Support is Available

It's normal to feel overwhelmed by news of the outbreak, particularly if you have experienced mental health issues before. Acknowledge feelings of distress, worry or concern and seek professional support if required.

If you have teams or individuals in your workplace who are impacted directly by the coronavirus or presenting with heightened anxiety, worry or fear of contracting the virus, reach out so we can provide guidance and support.

Acacia EAP offers support 24/7/365
1300 364 273

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