



Coping with COVID-19

The pandemic has disrupted and wreaked havoc in many people's lives and livelihood. With the deadly second wave, lockdowns, quarantines and large number of cases and death; brought about heightened mental health concerns among the general population. Stress, fear, health anxiety, depression and insomnia are exacerbated and increasingly being observed among the general population, children and adolescents, health care workers and the elderly. There is a mental health crisis and pandemic going on along with COVID-19. Mandatory isolation, being confined to home, financial concerns, decreased social contact, abrupt changes in daily routines and work schedules; has created additional stressors. And change in mode of education and being confined to home for longer periods than ever has been difficult to adjust for children, led to irritability, inattention etc. Hence, adaptive coping becomes especially important.

Coping Strategies that help:

People in different ages, in different life stages have their own circumstances that might be causing them different stressors. One way doesn't fit all, but there are some common ones that help everybody get through these troubling times. Normalization of stress, anxiety and fear is the first step. This step is important in giving some comfort, realizing that one is not alone in going through these emotions. Next step is to deal with it. As there is reduced social contact, it is important to digitally maintain touch with friends and family. Having social support systems is a stress buster. It is also essential to be behaviorally active with scheduling your recreational activities and physical exercise. They could be board games, outdoor games etc., which could help in creating some quality family time as well. It is also important to keep away from maladaptive coping strategies like substance abuse.

Coping Strategies for Children

With a sudden loss of routine, a structured schedule that they have been following till now is lost. Although sometime is occupied with online classes, fun ways of fostering academic learning can also be devised etc. A structured schedule of recreational activities that they enjoy, behavioral activation through physical activities, games etc. can be helpful in utilizing their time better and even limit their social media intake and screen time. Since, everybody is at home, some quality bonding time can also be arranged; through fun activities that is enjoyed by all. Keeping children engaged and helping them be in touch with other family and friends digitally can also help. Apart from this it is also extremely important to talk to children about the ongoing situation, in a developmentally appropriate fashion. In a two-way communication method, raise awareness about the pandemic, the safety measures to follow, masking and hygiene such as washing hands (how and how long). Also, listen to the child and help them understand and clarify their doubts about COVID. Check on how they are feeling, reassure and support them if they express fear, anxiety or stress. Let them know that you are there for them; if they want to talk about it and listen to them with the intent to understand their feelings and show empathy.

Coping strategies for adolescents

Adolescents can go through anxiety, fear of COVID-19, concern about their loved one's health and stress. Due to reduced social contact, they can feel distant from their friends. During adolescence, friendships gain importance. Adolescents look towards friendship for meeting their needs; such as self-esteem, validation, belonging, support etc. Hence, it is important to find a set of activities that keep them engaged socially, personally, and physically. On the social level, although social media helps in connecting with friends and loved ones; it is important to watch screen time. Put some time for connecting with friends and family; but also schedule time for physical and recreational activities. On the personal level, coming up with recreational activities that they would enjoy; like reading a book, catching up on a series, cooking, singing, dancing etc. can help in keeping them engaged and take their mind off things. For relaxation, mindfulness meditation, yoga, would also help. There are also apps now for mindfulness meditation. On the physical level, trying to maintain a healthy diet, setting time for some physical exercise etc. would be very important.

Coping for elderly

With the awareness of their vulnerability, they may have increased anxiety, worry, depression and fear of severity and death. And the abundant of information hitting them from social media and news may not be very conducive as well. It is important to limit their news intake. The most important is staying connected with family members, digitally. This brings them a sense of belongingness, social support which can go a long way in maintaining mental health. Remaining behaviorally active, with activities they are physically able to do. It can be some indoor games, meditation, breathing exercises and yoga. Some household chores they are able to do and other recreational activities they find relaxing. Other activities such as gratitude journaling etc. can also help.

Coping for Healthcare Workers

Working on the frontlines of the pandemic; they are faced with many concerns from excessive work stress, long work hours, fear of contacting the illness, fear of transmission to their loved ones, fear of severity and death etc. Normalization of stress, anxiety and depression is especially important for healthcare workers. Acceptance can help as well. Being in touch with their loved ones can help them relax. It is also essential for them to have breaks and rest periods during work with enough sleep, to be able to function optimally. Seeking support from mental health professionals can help in the ventilating and normalizing their emotions and mental health concerns. Stress relieving activities with colleagues can be helpful as well.

Coping with isolation

In case of isolation, the mental health concerns maybe be heightened with COVID-19 anxiety, fear of contacting the illness, its severity etc. and being confined all day and idleness can be especially damaging for mental health. Having support, help and reassurance from family members can help with stress. To have a sense of purpose and plan for the day can be helpful. It could be meditation, relaxing activities like listening to music, reading a book, some physical activities and breathing exercises, sound sleep and food, journaling, drawing etc. helps in distracting and giving some comfort.

Coping for Parents

For parents and especially working parents; with children at home, work from home and household chores can all be very difficult to manage. There may be long working hours, experiences of burn out. And with technology involved in work now; feeling of always working, responding to calls and email may lead to the [‘always-on’](#) culture. Hence, devising adaptive coping strategies can be very helpful. Follow the link to read more on burnout and work-life balance skills. [Burnout and work-life balance.](#)

Visit our blog for more articles and resources. safespacecounsellinghyderabad.com/blog-1

Visit our website for more information and mental health help and services.

safespacecounsellinghyderabad.com