

'Everything will be all right'

Words of Encouragement amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

Tips

With millions of people the world over entering isolation to fight against the spread of Coronavirus COVID19, the need for positivity becomes even more critical. Many people are worried about what's happening, about getting sick ourselves or about the people around us, about what's happening with work, and what the future holds. Remember that's it's ok to talk about what we're experiencing right now -- and things are changing very fast. Don't stew in anxiety. Find creative ways to bring people together with a sense of connection, fun, and practical solutions. Here are a few tips:

- 1. Keep a COVID-19 journal of some kind.** It's an extraordinary time in the history of the world, so think about documenting your experience in some way. Keeping a journal will help you process this experience as it unfolds. Also, later in life, you'll probably want to look back at this journal.
- 2. Try Scrapbooking:** Look for big moments (the email from the school announcing the closing), journalistic moments (empty shelves at the grocery store), and moments of humor or sweetness or absurdity.
- 3. Create a three-tiered plan for projects.** Being stuck at home is an opportunity that none of us wished for, but it's an opportunity nevertheless. Look for ways to use the time to get things done you otherwise wouldn't be able to do: 1) Ambitious projects, 2) Medium projects and 3) Fun projects.
- 4. Exercise.** Physical activity is so important for health, immunity, and mood. For most of us, our habits are disrupted. So it's important to have a plan for what you're going to do. Your daily 20-minute walk around the house, work building or down the street is a good time to call someone! Social contact is so important, so by walking and talking, you achieve two important aims.
- 5. Beware of information overload.** We all want to stay up-to-date with the latest news, but it's easy to get overwhelmed. Learn what you need to learn, but don't get sucked into the three-hour scroll. Monitor your screen time so you have a solid sense of your habits.
- 6. Catch up on books, podcasts, movies, or TV shows.** These activities will give you a sense of accomplishment, and keep your mind engaged and active, and they'll also distract you from anxiety. Give yourself mental breaks.
- 7. Continue or create comforting rituals.** You may already have rituals that help you feel grounded throughout the day. Find ways to have pleasant patterns through your day that make you feel grounded and calm. It might be meditation, it might be a cup of your favorite tea, it might be a bedtime story with your children.

- 8. Review the emergency kit for anxiety, worry, and stress. These tips and others were found on this helpful website:** <https://gretchenrubin.com/podcast-episode/240-very-special-episode-on-anxiety/>
- a. Remind yourself - perfectionism is about anxiety, not standards.
 - b. Calm your breathing using apps or other methods.
 - c. Reach out to others.
 - d. Add a distraction by giving yourself a mental break to get temporary relief from anxiety.
 - e. Plan more - What can I do to make a challenging situation easier or more comfortable?
 - f. Take action in the world - "Be the change you want to see in the world"
 - g. Make a list - When thoughts are racing in your mind, put them down on paper.
 - h. Increase your Energy - Work on your sleep; exercise; don't inundate yourself with upsetting news.
 - i. Identify the problem - Don't just get worked up; try to pinpoint and take action.
 - j. Schedule time to worry. Surprising but effective!
 - k. Seek more information on something that's worrying you. Sometimes, knowledge can be very helpful...not just googling physical symptoms! Ask yourself, "Is there someone who could give me some insight on what I'm worried about?"
 - l. Start tracking. If you're worried about a physical symptom, or a pattern of behavior, start keeping a record. Our memories can be very faulty.
 - m. Beware of catastrophizing. Catastrophizing is when we magnify negative consequences, assume they're certain to happen.
 - n. Treat yourself to a healthy treat.
 - o. Do good deeds for other people. One of the best ways to make ourselves happier is to make other people happier.
 - p. When you're super-stressed about a mistake you've made, remind yourself, "We've all done it."
- 9. Take time to appreciate your home and those who are with you:** Write a daily list of three or more things in and around your at home for which you are grateful and share your gratitude with others.
- 10. Reach out with love.** Meaning many things...and it applies in this situation. The whole world is reeling under the weight of events. This is an event that reminds us all that we're united in our common human hope for good health and peaceful prosperity. "Be patient and tough; one day this pain will be useful to you."-Ovid. None of us wants to experience this lesson, but we can learn from it, if we will.

Resources

- Workplace Readiness: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=359a81e7_6

- Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus): A Parent Resource: [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)
- CDC Managed Stress and Anxiety: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2F coping.html
- Covid-19, explained by Carl (who has it): <https://www.vox.com/2020/3/5/21166737/coronavirus-covid-19-diamond-princess-today-explained>
- COVID-19: How to respond constructively – Action for Happiness: <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/news/covid-19-how-to-respond>
- Resilience: An Essential Component of Today’s Pharmacist: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msD5HQWE5eM&feature=youtu.be>
- The Happiness Project (Revised Edition): https://www.amazon.com/Happiness-Project-Revised-Aristotle-Generally/dp/0062414852/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=sl1&tag=thehappproj-20&linkId=42bd8f856187ea60b9a61f861be4d582&language=en_US
- APhA Resources: <https://www.pharmacist.com/well-being>
- AACP Resources: <https://www.aacp.org/resource/wellness-and-resilience-pharmacy-education>