Coping With Uncertainty About The Coronavirus

Presented by ComPsych® Corporation
Agenda

- Discuss uncertainty as it relates to your ability to cope with the Coronavirus
- Review individual stress reactions and their impact on coping
- Explore coping strategies for anyone experiencing any uncertainty
Question

What are the emotional issues you are experiencing regarding the Coronavirus?
Perception and Control

• People need to feel in control
• People need to be able to make sense of what is happening in order to predict and control
• Uncertainty can be extremely distressing
• Common emotional reactions are:
  - Fear and Anxiety
  - Mistrust and Suspicion
  - Anger
• These emotions can prompt tunnel vision and impulsive actions
Circle of Control – Where Should We Focus?

Out of our hands
Influence
Control
Question

*How does ANY uncertainty impact your mood, behaviors, and overall functioning?*
Common Reactions to Uncertainty

Physical Reactions
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Headaches
- Thirst and dry mouth
- Sweating

Behavioral Reactions
- Emotional outbursts
- Impaired work performance
- Avoidance of others
- Increased family conflicts
- Increased need to keep busy
- Increased sick time
Common Reactions to Uncertainty

**Emotional Reactions**
- Fear, Anxiety
- Feeling of numbness
- Guilt
- Irritability
- Anger
- Grief and sadness
- Helplessness
- Anxiety and depression

**Cognitive Reactions**
- Lack of Concentration
- Confusion
- Intrusive thoughts and images
- Memory problems
- Hyper vigilance
- Poor decision making and problem solving
Acknowledge the Distress

• Distress with uncertainty is normal

• Acknowledge it in yourself and in others you care about
  - “What is happening?”
  - “What are you feeling?”

• Verbalize it out loud, talk about it with others, write about it

• Acknowledging the distress will not resolve it but it allows the opportunity to move forward and make choices

• Exercising choice gives us control and reduces distress
Avoidance and Control Coping

Most individuals combine both avoidance coping and control coping tactics

Avoidance Coping:

• Limiting your exposure to that which triggers discomfort
• Taking time off, getting away
• Using distraction
• Not discussing the situation
• Withdrawing socially
• Alcohol use, spending, over-eating
Control Coping

- Asking: “What are my choices?” “What is something I can do?”
- Focusing on accomplishing objectives: “What do I want to accomplish today?” “What is the obstacle?”
- Focusing on the positive: “What am I grateful for?”
- Speaking up on your own behalf – be assertive about your needs
- Finding ways to help others and ask for help
Moving Forward

- Understanding
- Managing as an individual
- Maintaining top quality performance
Helping Our Children Feel Safe

Put the threat in perspective
Avoid exaggerated words or phrases:
• “The worst ever”
• “Nothing helps”
• “Never again”

Talk about measures, like school closings and quarantines, that keep your family safe
• “You will be going back to school”
• “You will be able to out again”
• “You will be seeing your friends again”

Don’t make false promises about when these things will happen

Give them a hug!

If you are concerned about the psychological well-being of your child, call the EAP
Self-Care

• Be cautious about using avoidance coping such as isolation, withdrawal or relying on alcohol
• Avoid unnecessary exposure to media that might heighten uncertainty without providing additional information
• Maintain your normal routine as it provides stability
• Develop new routines which allow you to relax and decompress
  - Incorporate deep breathing and relaxation time
  - Exercise
  - Sleep at least 7 hours a night
  - Stay in communication with people you enjoy
• Seek professional help as needed
Review

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Thank You for Attending

Your single source for confidential support, expert information and valuable resources, when you need it the most.

Go Online: guidanceresources.com

Or call a counselor

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week