

# teenAID Tips for Mental Health during COVID-19



When our world changes quickly and suddenly, in ways that feel disappointing, unpredictable, unsafe or threatening, it is normal to experience changes to our thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

## Normal reactions include:

- Feeling stressed or overwhelmed, frustrated or angry, worried or anxious
- Feeling restless, agitated, on 'high alert', or not able to calm down
- Being teary, sad, fatigued or tired, losing interest in usually enjoyable activities or finding it difficult to feel happy
- Worrying about going to public spaces, becoming unwell or contracting germs
- Constantly thinking about the situation, unable to move on or think about much else
- Experiencing physical symptoms such as increased fatigue or other uncomfortable sensations

People can react very differently to stressful situations such as the COVID-19 virus and you should not expect any particular reaction. Instead, reassure yourself and others that feeling any of the above symptoms is understandable in these challenging times.

## Tips for mental health:

- Maintain a daily routine with consistent sleep, activity and study patterns
- Stay connected with others and try to find moments of humour
- Talk to people you feel comfortable with about your feelings or worries, then give yourself permission to stop worrying
- Eat breakfast every morning, plus snacks and meals at regular times throughout the day
- Increase the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables you are eating but do not make any drastic changes to your diet
- Limit alcohol and other drugs and try not to use these as coping strategies
- Limit coffee/caffeine or energy drinks as these will increase feelings of anxiety and make it difficult to relax
- Look for patterns or be aware of which situations make you feel particularly worried or anxious; try to use relaxation or distraction techniques, or get a family member or friend to help when in these situations
- Relieve times of high anxiety with exercise or physical activity; engage in regular aerobic exercise (e.g., walk, jog, yoga, dance)
- Limit the amount of time you spend talking about or watching/listening to news media or social media if you are finding information about the COVID-19 situation overwhelming or distressing
- Do hobbies or activities that you enjoy, calm you down or focus your mind and body. These could be art/craft, physical activity, listening to music, reading, journaling, watching tv/movies or chatting with friends (remotely)
- Understand that the people around you are probably also finding this situation stressful and they might also be having difficulty controlling their emotions; try and resolve conflict
- If you continue to feel overwhelmed, out of control or unable to calm down after a period of weeks, seek help from a mental health professional.
- Be kind to yourself and each other as we work through this together.

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While the current situation is unsettling, there are lots of resources and support to help us maintain our health and safety.

## Helpful Resources

Some of these free online resources might help you to cope with stress and better manage these uncertain times:

- <https://headspace.org.au/young-people/how-to-cope-with-stress-related-to-covid-19/>
- <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>
- <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/mindfulness>
- <https://au.reachout.com/tools-and-apps>

If you continue to feel overwhelmed, out of control or unable to calm down after a period of weeks, seek help from a mental health professional:

- <https://headspace.org.au/ehespace/> or 1800 650 890
- <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens> or 1800 55 1800
- <https://online.beyondblue.org.au/Webmodules/chat/InitialInformation.aspx> or 1300 22 4636
- <https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat> or 13 11 14

## References

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[https://mhfa.com.au/sites/default/files/MHFA\\_adult\\_guidelines\\_A4\\_2012.pdf](https://mhfa.com.au/sites/default/files/MHFA_adult_guidelines_A4_2012.pdf)

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