



Self-care is Healthcare

Coping in pandemic

This is a self-help material created by Corvinus Student Counseling Center addressing potential emotional experiences and coping strategies in pandemic



Coping with emotional distress



Follow news but limit your media consumption

Avoid watching or listening to news reports 24/7. Look to credible for information on the infectious disease outbreak and how to protect yourself.



Keep up the daily routine

Try to include regular daily activities, such as work, exercise or learning, even if they must be executed remotely.

Follow updates coming from your coordinator

Follow updates coming from your coordinator / contact your program coordinator in case you need clarification.



Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Get enough sleep, eat well and exercise in your home when you are physically capable of doing so.



Use psychological strategies

Examine your worries and aim to be realistic in your assessment of the actual concern as well as your ability to cope. Try not to catastrophize, instead focus on what you can do and accept the things you can't change.



The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in. Your choice or lack of choice to stay can also influence your current mental status.

Common sources of stress during this period include a drop in meaningful activities, sensory stimuli and social engagement; financial strain from being unable to work; and a lack of access to typical coping strategies such as going to the gym or attending religious services.

Some typical emotions you might experience these days

Fear and anxiety

- You may feel anxious or worried about yourself or your family members contracting COVID-19 or spreading it to others.
- The resentment that your friends and family may feel if they need to go into quarantine as a result of contact with you
- The experience of monitoring yourself, or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of the disease
- Time taken off from work and the potential loss of income and job security
- The challenges of securing things you need, such as groceries and personal care items
- Some people may have trouble sleeping, eating or focusing on daily tasks.

Depression and boredom

- A hiatus from work and other meaningful activities interrupts your daily routine and may result in feelings of sadness, hopelessness or low mood
- Extended periods of time spent at home can also cause feelings of boredom and loneliness.

Anger, frustration or irritability

- The loss of agency and personal freedom associated with isolation and quarantine can often feel frustrating.
- You may also experience anger or resentment toward those who have issued quarantine or isolation orders or if you feel you were exposed to the virus because of another person's negligence.
- Uncertainty or frustration about how long you will need to remain in this situation, and uncertainty about the future

Stigmatization

- If you are sick or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, you may feel stigmatized by others who fear they will contract the illness if they interact with you.





Coping with emotional distress

Follow news but limit your media consumption

Consider the real risk of harm to yourself and others around you. The public perception of risk during a situation such as an infectious disease outbreak is often inaccurate. It does not mean situation and restriction should not be taken seriously however catastrophizing cognitions can be weakened by critical thinking.

Stay up to date on what is happening, while limiting your media exposure. Avoid watching or listening to news reports 24/7 since this tends to increase anxiety and worry. Look to **credible sources for information** on the infectious disease outbreak and **how to protect yourself**.

Concerns about insurance, visa, scholarship status

Follow updates coming from your coordinator/contact your coordinator in case you need clarification

Maintaining a daily routine

It can help preserve a sense of order and purpose despite the unfamiliarity of isolation and quarantine. Try to include regular daily activities, such as work, exercise or learning, even if they must be executed remotely. It might be opportunity for trying new pastimes or practice hobbies you did not have time previously though they are great source of joy and relax.

Stay virtually connected with others

Social distancing does not need to result in emotional isolation. You might especially feel the need to connect with your beloved ones, peers nowadays. Homesickness can be retriggered no matter how long you have been in Hungary.

Do not hesitate to use phone calls, text messages, video chat and social media to stay in contact with them and get further access to social support networks. If you're feeling sad or anxious, use these conversations as an opportunity to discuss your experience and associated emotions. We also suggest not to limit the conversation to COVID-19 only but discuss further topics too which can facilitate positive emotions.

Facebook groups have already formed to facilitate communication, offer programs, activities which you can join, perform at home.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Get enough sleep, eat well and exercise in your home when you are physically capable of doing so. Try to avoid using alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with the stresses of isolation and quarantine.

Use psychological strategies to manage stress and stay positive

Examine your worries and aim to be realistic in your assessment of the actual concern as well as your ability to cope. Try not to catastrophize; instead focus on what you can do and accept the things you can't change. One way to do this is to keep a daily gratitude journal.

You may also choose to download smartphone applications or visit websites that deliver **mindfulness** and **relaxation** exercises.

Create a list of your resources which have helped you in the past to cope with difficult situations. It can be any characteristics, values of yours, favoured activities etc. Any tiny thing matters.

Focusing on the altruistic reasons for social distancing, quarantine or isolation can also help mitigate psychological distress. Remember that by taking such measures, you are reducing the possibility of transmitting COVID-19 and protecting those who are most vulnerable.

