Avera ✜

Employee Assistance Program _____

Coping With Anxiety During a Pandemic

The daily updates and the new—sometimes extreme—precautions enacted to protect communities from infection can certainly lead to fear and anxiety. And the fear and anxiety relating to a pandemic may rise to an excessive level and get in the way of one's ability to function well.

It is natural to become stressed in the face of uncertainty related to a spreading virus, the need for social distancing, and the economic ramifications. However, it is important to find healthy ways to cope.

1. Follow the everyday precautions that CDC and WHO experts are advising to help protect yourself and your loved ones. Taking precautionary measures will help prevent the spread of the disease.

2. Recognize that you can help control the spread of the virus by taking common sense actions like washing your hands, using hand sanitizer, and practicing social distancing.

3. Resist the urge to constantly watch the news related to the pandemic. You probably already know what you can do personally to reduce the spread of the virus, and it's not going to be helpful to focus on the numbers of infected people. The sensational headlines and social media posts may lead us to believe that risks are greater than they actually are.

4. Practice emotional regulation and use proven calming techniques. Let yourself engage in some frivolous distraction; take deep breaths and exhale slowly, etc.

5. Remind yourself that there are smart people all over the world who are working on solutions to the current crisis.

6. Maintain close connections with others, remotely if need be—we're all in this together.

Support others who are feeling anxious about the pandemic.

Indeed, we're all in this together. You can help others during this time of crisis by encouraging them to practice the above coping strategies. If you know someone is experiencing significant distress or seems to becoming paralyzed with fear, help that person connect with an appropriate mental health resource, including the Employee Assistance Program.

Remember you can always reach out to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for support. Your EAP is an immediate, confidential, and free resource for whatever life issues you may be facing. Avera EAP can be accessed by calling **800-527-9394** or **605-322-4069**.

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