

# Taking Care of Your Mental Health During Difficult Times



**Dealing with uncertainty** has everyone a little stressed and confused. If you are feeling some anxiety and worry about it. You are not alone. YSU Student Counseling Services cares about what you are feeling and we want to help guide you through these tough times. Here are some things we'd like to share with you to make it all a little more manageable.

For most people stress reactions will lessen over the first few weeks. However, when symptoms are significantly impacting functioning, becoming harder to manage, or are increasing in severity, then there is increased need for concern. We encourage you to reach out to Student Counseling Services. Please call us at 330-941-3737 (24/7).

Student Counseling Services continues to provide free, short-term counseling for currently enrolled YSU students and consultation and referral services for the YSU community.

Student Counseling Services is open and available to address student's needs, including anxiety. As we are still in uncertain times, we find that students are struggling with managing anxiety and finding a way to move forward in a healthy way both emotionally and physically. We can provide strategies and offer encouragement through counseling. We are not currently meeting with students in person however, services are available by phone at 330-941-3737, Monday–Friday, 8 am–5 pm. If you are in crisis or want to set up a Counseling phone appointment, please call. If you have a mental health emergency or crisis during non-business hours or over the weekend, call 330-941-3737 and after the brief message press 1 to speak with a mental health professional.

Please consider the following recommendations for promoting your mental wellbeing during this time.

## 1. **Stay Informed.**

Obtain the latest information from credible and reliable sources of information. Up-to-date, accurate recommendations can be found at the following websites:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>
- <https://ysu.edu/coronavirus-information>
- <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19>

## 2. **Limit media exposure.**

Turn off the television and/or alert messaging on your phone if it is increasing your distress. Exposure to media can be healthy or unhealthy, for some individuals knowing helps to feel a sense of control over the situation while for others it may reinforce anxiety and fear. Research has shown that excess media exposure to coverage of stressful events can result in negative outcomes, use trusted resources to gather the information you need then turn it off if it's causing stress.

## 3. **Anticipate stress reactions.**

Emotional distress is common and normal in the context of uncertainty and potentially life-threatening situations.

## 4. **Recognize the signs of distress.**

Stress can present itself in different ways including physical, emotional, or cognitive ways. One common response for young adults is a feeling of invincibility and or emotional detachment which can lead to behaviors that may significantly increase risks.

*See reverse side.*

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**Student  
Counseling  
Services**

#### 4. Recognize the signs of distress, continued

- Some other common reactions include:
- Excessive worry, hard to stop thinking about what happened
- Sleeping Issues; having trouble sleeping or staying asleep
- Ruminating
- Hypervigilance; getting up to check the news or check on family
- Difficulty relaxing
- Muscle tension
- Feel keyed up or on edge
- Increased alcohol, tobacco, or drug use
- Irritability with emotional outbursts
- Wanting to be alone/difficulty communicating
- Crying frequently
- Inability to feel pleasure
- Feeling detached or numb
- Some common physical responses can be: diarrhea, aches and pains, and appetite changes
- Some common feelings are: sadness, guilt, anger, fear, and anxiety.
- Some common cognitive responses can be: memory issues, confusion, indecisiveness and decreased concentration

#### 5. Try different strategies to reduce distress.

There is no right or wrong way to deal with this stress. The strategies that will work for you will be yours, what works for you may not work for others. It is important to keep at it and try different things. Some strategies can include:

- Being prepared (e.g., developing a personal/ family plan).
- Educate yourself about preventive measures hand-washing technique, cough etiquette, to more complex medical recommendations for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.
- Talking to loved ones about worries and concerns, know that your feelings are normal and others may be experiencing them too. Connect with friends and family in novel ways if you're isolated. Connect with those you feel closest to for support.
- Schedule positive activities. Do things that are enjoyable, even if you don't feel like it. Like listening to music, exercising, practicing breathing routines, relaxation strategies, mindfulness, spending time in nature or with animals, journaling, or reading inspirational texts are some simple ways to help manage emotions.
- Take time to renew your spirit through prayer, meditation or helping others
- Eat a balanced and nutritious diet
- Get enough sleep every night. We know sleep is restorative reduces anxiety, helps learning, helps problem solving, and allows the brain to rest. Even short periods of sleep deprivation can be troublesome. Sleep Loop: Mia Luna Life (YouTube)
- Engage in exercise as much as possible for overall good health and to help reduce stress too
- If possible stick to your usual daily routine.

### Helpful App

Mindful • Calm • Stop breathe and think.

More available on our website:

<https://ysu.edu/student-counseling-services>

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Resource for Faculty & Staff:  
Impact Solutions 800-227-6007.

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*Adapted from Northwestern University 2020*

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