



COVID-19 : Let's protect our mental health too !

Self-care

The current coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) is a completely new and unusual reality. In such a situation, it is perfectly normal to feel overwhelmed and to be struggling to find balance in life. Below are some tips to help you cope with the situation in a healthy way:

➤ Be patient and kind to yourself



- Try to improve your self-awareness and to accept your emotions/reactions;
- Be confident, believe in your abilities and focus on your strengths;
- Allow yourself to feel whatever emotions you are experiencing (anger, sadness, anxiety). Accept that it is a normal response when facing such exceptional circumstances;
- Understand stress reactions may be varied;
- Talk about what you are going through with your loved ones or someone you trust.

➤ Stay healthy



- Keep a healthy diet, be active every day and get a good sleep;
- Find a daily routine despite quarantine measures: go outside in your garden or on your balcony, dance/exercise in your living room, go up and down the stairs, go for walks alone or go jogging;
- Have a good laugh, joke about things;
- Remember that being positive spreads around!

➤ Find easy daily goals for yourself



- Find a project for yourself that you will enjoy and work on it a bit everyday, step by step (working in your garden, painting your house, trying a new recipe, making a photo album for seniors);
- Explore new horizons, try new activities (e.g. learning a foreign language/how to play an instrument, drawing etc.).

➤ Avoid news overload (traditional and social medias)



- Limit media exposure (an overexposed brain is a more worried brain);
- Focus on the official daily briefing.



➤ Learn to tolerate uncertainty

- Be flexible, accept your emotions;
- Remember everybody is trying to adapt to this new situation;
- Keep in mind that answers to your questions will not come immediately.



➤ Give yourself time for leisure and relaxation

- Relax, meditate, try mindfulness exercises;
- Take a bath, watch movies or fun T.V series;
- Listen to some music, play boardgames with your family;
- Read, let your creativity flow.



➤ Keep in touch with your loved ones (family, friends, colleagues etc.)

- Give them a phone call, exchange text messages, meet online on Skype for example;
- Send emails or letters.



➤ Avoid over-consumption of alcohol, medication and drugs

- Maintain healthy life habits (when facing a high level of stress, it is tempting to find ways to escape and to avoid anxiety);
- Also limit your coffee consumption and other psychostimulants that could aggravate anxiety.

Keep an eye out for signs of distress. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness! If you feel overwhelmed, for whatever reason, or if you/one of your loved ones is in distress you can use the resources below:

- Psychosocial help line : Info-social 811
- Suicide prevention hotline : 1-866-APPELLE (277-3553)
- Essential services directory : <http://ressortgim.ca/covid-19/> (in French)
- Mental Health resource Guide for the Gaspé Coast and the Magdalen Islands : https://casa-gaspe.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Mental-health-Guide_May9.pdf

Resources	
<p>To deal with anxiety better :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en • https://ecolebranchee.com/ (in French) • https://carrefour-education.qc.ca/ (in French) 	<p>For a healthy lifestyle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.dieteticiens.ca/News/2020/Advice-for-the-general-public-about-COVID-19?lang=en-CA • https://www.defisante.ca/(in French) • https://move50plus.ca/(in French) • https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/protecting-your-well-being-in-the-covid-19-pandemic/
<p>To manage family time better :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.ecoleouverte.ca/en/ • http://www.alloprof.qc.ca/ (in French) • https://www.teteamodeler.com/ (in French) • https://www.viedeparents.ca/ (in French) • https://naitreetgrandir.com/fr/ (in French) • https://vifamagazine.ca/ (in French) • http://www.elaborer.org/covid_enfant.pdf 	<p>Other sources of information :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.thepharmacist.com/ • https://www.cyberaide.ca/app/en/index • https://kidshelpphone.ca/?_ga=2.82577878.1369731909.1591822880-1224784992.1591822880 • https://www.ligneparents.com/LigneParents (in French) • https://www.teljeunes.com/Accueil (in French) • https://ampq.org/info-maladie/covid-19/(in French) • http://www.espacesansviolence.org/gaspesielesiles(in French)

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RÉFÉRENCES : Association des médecins psychiatres du Québec. (2020). *Info maladies : COVID-19*. <https://ampq.org/info-maladie/covid-19/>; Center for Addiction and Mental Health. (2020). *La santé mentale et la pandémie de COVID-19*. <https://www.camh.ca/fr/info-sante/mental-health-and-covid-19>; CISSS Chaudière-Appalaches. (2020). *Prendre soin de nous : des outils et des trucs*. <https://www.ciissca.com/index.php?id=3033>; Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux. (avril 2020). *Publications du ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux: COVID-19*. <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/sujets/covid-19?page=2&date=DESC>; Ordre des psychologues du Québec. (2020). *Pandémie de la COVID-19 : conseils psychologiques et informations au grand public*. <https://www.ordrepsy.qc.ca/coronavirus-covid-19-conseils-psychologiques-et-informations-au-grand-public>.