

Coping In The Face of Adversity TIP SHEET

- I. Questions to help identify your needs
 - a. What do you have control over? What do you have NO CONTROL OVER (make a list)
 - b. Who places demands on you?
 - c. What are your sources of fact-derived information?
 - d. What has worked for you in the past?
 - e. What have you tried so far, during the COVID19 Pandemic?
 - i. What worked?
 - ii. What did not work?
 - iii. Do you know why?
 - f. Who helps you? Who makes you feel better? Worse
 - g. Who depends upon you?
- II. Core Principles for Managing Stress before it manages you
 - a. Manage your time and implement as much structure as possible
 - b. Manage your input (that includes social media, news sources, stories from others). Set limits (schedules may help).
 - c. Are there times of day that you are better at self-care than others?
 - d. Seek facts
 - e. Identify, label and recognize your emotions
 - f. Remember that there is no right or wrong way to cope – there are only good and less good ways for you to cope
 - g. Identify those who help you and those who make you feel worse (even if you can't change your level of contact)
- III. Standardized coping strategies
 - a. Remember energy (which you utilize and deplete each day) needs to be replenished, and that can be done in 3-minute intervals or over the course of a longer stretch of time
 - b. We all do better when we have strategies that can be used alone and with others, at home & at work
 - c. Read your body – recognize your personal signs of stress and distress, examining your breath, heart rate, digestion, head, energy, focus and so on.
 - d. Identify strategies to reduce the impact of stress and distress on your body. Those could include breathing strategies, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, mindfulness & gratitude practices, exercise, music, comfort foods & Drinks (only if these are not connected to risky behaviors for you) (not too much), comfort fragrances and touch, activity (some people cope best by being active and by giving to others), and so much more. Turn on music and dance around your kitchen.
 - e. Get enough sleep. Get some exercise.
 - f. Make a plan, check in daily to see how your plan is working.

- g. Know who to reach out to when your self-care is not working. Practice reaching out.
 - h. Know your personal signs for when underlying problems are exacerbated – whether those problems are physical health, psychological health, relational, work related and so on. Identify a trusted person who can also point out to you when your “signs” are showing and share your list.
 - i. Have a discussion with your pre-existing care team and your informal network of care givers
 - ii. Label your risks and risky behaviors – and share that with a trusted support person.
 - i. How do you talk about, and manage fear?
- IV. Personalized coping strategies -- Self-Care at home and at work
- a. Make a grid for yourself – 4 quadrants (at home alone, at home with others, at work alone & at work with others). Your workplace, family & social network accommodations are not needed for what you need alone.
 - b. Look at your list daily, update it every other day until it works for you – then less frequently
 - c. Don’t forget that there is NO ONE SIZE FITS ALL. Some people like guided imagery, others like participating in phone trees, and yet others prefer to do crossword puzzles or read romance novels.
 - d. Look for something positive each day. Label it, stay with it. It could be quite small or huge. It is there – after all, we are doing this together.
 - e. Laugh, be creative, try something new.
- V. Specific to providing help to others -- Questions, System, Individual, Caregivers.
- a. Who needs help?
 - b. How do we know their self-assessment is valid and thorough? What else do we need to know? Do?
 - c. Who can ask for help and who requires assessment and check ins.
 - d. What have we done to prepare folks?
 - e. What has worked in the past?
 - f. What resources are available? What resources have been limited and in what manner?
 - g. What do the caregivers (professional, community, family) need? Is that available? Can they ask for it?
 - h. Can the system afford (practically, staffing, financial) to do the work?
 - i. Do regulations need to change?
 - j. How do you talk about (and manage) fear?

Richard Hendrick March 13th 2020

Brother Richard Hendrick, a Capuchin Franciscan living in Ireland, has penned a touching poem about coronavirus.

Lockdown

Yes there is fear.

Yes there is isolation.

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes

But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other

across the empty squares,

keeping their windows open

so that those who are alone

may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland

Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know

is busy spreading fliers with her number

through the neighbourhood

So that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples

are preparing to welcome

and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting

All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality

To how big we really are.

To how little control we really have.

To what really matters.

To Love.

So we pray and we remember that

Yes there is fear.

But there does not have to be hate.

Yes there is isolation.

But there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes there is panic buying.

Paula G Panzer, MD

March 23, 2020

But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

Paula G Panzer, MD
March 23, 2020