



TE AWAMUTU COLLEGE

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Coping with Mental Stress related to Covid-19

Information related to the spread of the Covid-19 virus and measures to limit its spread can cause mental stress and for many create an unsettling environment. Uncertainty related to the spread of the virus can trigger anxiety, stress, feelings of panic, fear and impact on people's general mood.

Given what is happening it is important that we do our best to boost our general mental health. Here are some ideas that might benefit yourself, families and students.

1. Media

Seek information from reputable media sources.

If you find the news too triggering, limit how often you listen/ view it.

Be aware that dramatic language in the media can sensationalise and draw you in to the drama of the situation. Words like victim, diseased etc are negative and can trigger fear.

Put your attention on the positive stories that come out. Focus on the recoveries rather than the deaths.

2. Maintain healthy routines

Set up / maintain good daily routines. Eg, getting up in the morning, and going to bed at the same time each day.

Eat healthy food, drink lots of water, sleep well and make sure you do some exercise.

Not only is this good for your health it is sending a message of self-care to your subconscious which will counter the fight or flight mode that can be activated.

3. Use digital technology to connect

Reach out and ask for support and connect with others (seek out positive support). Use technology to sustain relationships with friends and family. When we allow ourselves the opportunity to share what we worry about we can receive validation and support.

Don't overdo screen time as this can cause agitation and edginess.

4. Talking with kids

Be realistic but reassuring about COVID-19. Kids process things differently to adults. Encourage discussion and questions but avoid oversharing and flooding with facts. Kids often need more straightforward answers to questions.

5. Take positive "self-care" action to reduce negative feelings and perceptions

Find things to keep you calm.

Tell yourself that how you are feeling is a normal reaction and will pass,

If you need to get it out of your system that is normal. Get a journal and write about your stress.

Talk to someone you trust, a friend, family member, counsellor, helpline.

Practise breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, mindfulness, pray, meditate and/ or do yoga to help you reduce stress.

Listen to music. Do craft, colour.

Use apps to help, eg Headspace, Calm, Breath, Insight Timer, Simply Being, SAM

6. Return to the simple things in life

Prioritise whatever gives you calm and comfort.

Take the opportunity to slow down, learn something new and rest.

The above information is adapted from the following sources:

https://www.dr-chloe.com/post/how-to-cope-with-covid-19-stress-9-mental-health-tips?utm_campaign=meetedgar&utm_medium=social&utm_source=meetedgar.com&fbclid=IwAR2P9dgPp62QLmKBNbWDAXZVCqKN8L8r9cpQ4aw5oe_tGQb1_tL166OrI6I

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/nz/blog/child-development-central/202003/resilience-and-routines-families-during-the-pandemic>

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public/covid-19-managing-your-mental-wellbeing>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

Where to go for help:

1737: We're here. [Free call or text 1737 any time](#), 24 hours a day. You'll get to talk to (or text with) a trained counsellor. Our service is completely free.

Youthline 0800 37 66 33

Free Text: **234** Email: talk@youthline.co.nz

Lifeline 0800 543 354 (0800LIFELINE) Hamilton 838 0719

24 hour telephone service for emotional support and counselling

Online: www.lifeline.org.nz or free text **HELP (4357)**

What's Up 0800 942 8787 (5-18 yr olds)

Depression Helpline 0800 111 757,

Free text: **4202** Online: <http://www.depression.org.nz>

www.justathought.co.nz

Free online therapy to improve your mental health.

Sparx Online e-therapy tool. www.sparx.org.nz

Mental health

Ministry of Health

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/>

<https://www.health.govt.nz/>

Health Line 0800 611 116

Staffed by registered nurses who will give information and advice about health issues.

The LOWDOWN Free Text: **5626** Online: <http://www.thelowdown.co.nz>

Email: team@thelowdown.co.nz Support for depression.

Are you OK? 0800 456 450 Violence support line.

SHINE 0508 744 633 A domestic abuse helpline

Kia Kaha

Guidance Counsellors - Te Awamutu College