

Managing Fears and Anxiety around Coronavirus

As the public health situation related to coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to evolve, you may be experiencing a wide range of thoughts, feelings, and reactions. This flyer includes information and resources intended to help you manage your fears and anxiety around COVID-19.

COMMON REACTIONS

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. You may be experiencing a range of feelings, including:

- Anxiety, worry, or fear related to your own health status or the health status of others
- Difficulty concentrating and sleeping
- Anxiety related to the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs or symptoms of COVID-19
- Worry about the need to take time off of school and/or work
- Helplessness
- Anger
- Uncertainty or frustration about how long you will need to remain in this situation
- Uncertainty about the future
- A desire to use alcohol or drugs to cope

WAYS TO SUPPORT YOURSELF

Although coronavirus is a serious public health issue, do not let worry control your life. There are many simple and effective ways to manage your fears and anxiety that can help to improve your overall emotional and physical well-being.

Get the facts. Consider the real risk of harm to yourself and others around you. The public perception of risk during a situation such as an infectious disease outbreak is often inaccurate, and media coverage may create the impression that people are in immediate danger. [Coronavirusupdates.uchicago.edu](https://coronavirusupdates.uchicago.edu) has information to help you stay informed about the situation on the University of Chicago campus. You can read further information at cdc.gov/coronavirus.

Keep things in perspective. Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you spend watching or listening to upsetting media coverage. Remember to take a break from watching the news and focus on the things that are positive in your life and things you have control over.

Be mindful of your assumptions about others. Someone who has a cough or a fever does not necessarily have coronavirus. Self-awareness is important in not stigmatizing others in our community.

Practice good hygiene. Adopt healthy hygienic habits, such as frequently washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Avoid contact with others who are sick, and stay home if you feel sick.

Be your own advocate. Do not be afraid to ask a health care provider questions, which may help reduce any distress associated with social distancing, quarantine, or isolation.

Keep connected. Maintaining social networks (even if done remotely during this time of social distancing) can help provide a sense of normalcy and valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress.

Seek additional help. Individuals who feel an overwhelming worry or anxiety should seek professional mental health support.

PUBLIC HEALTH TERMINOLOGY

What Is Social Distancing?

Social distancing means avoiding crowds and public transportation (e.g., bus, subway, taxi, ride share) and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others.

What Is Quarantine?

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. It lasts long enough to ensure the person has not contracted an infectious disease.

What Is Isolation?

Isolation prevents the spread of an infectious disease by separating people who are sick from those who are not. It lasts as long as the disease is contagious.

What Is Self-Isolation?

Self-isolation refers to the guidance for individuals to stay home and monitor their health following travel to a high-risk country.

CONTACT STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICE

For students interested in emotional or mental health support, a trained mental health clinician is available to speak with you over the phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by **calling the Student Counseling Service at 773.702.3625.**

Call 773.702.9800 to make an appointment with a Student Counseling Service clinician.