



## Coping with the Coronavirus Epidemic

News of the coronavirus—a highly transmissible respiratory illness—is nearly unavoidable, but may not always be accurate or reliable. Whether or not you are directly impacted or live in an area that’s been affected, it is common and understandable to experience stress or worry over this news. Our reactions to public health events are individualized. You may experience a wide range of emotions with varying amounts of intensity.

Here are some suggestions for how to cope more effectively with uncomfortable emotions provoked by news about the coronavirus:

**TAKE REASONABLE PRECAUTIONS** - The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) advise the following precautions to protect yourself and others against the coronavirus:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue away.
- Clean and disinfect frequently used surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

**BE REALISTIC ABOUT WHAT “REASONABLE” LOOKS LIKE** - It’s important to do what’s in your control to limit the spread of illness, but it’s also necessary to recognize the limitations of what can be controlled in the situation. Someone could take every precaution conceivable and still get sick, or they could do nothing and be fine. As with most things, the most effective route is somewhere in the middle. Try to implement precautionary strategies to the best of your ability, but don’t become unhelpfully preoccupied by them.

### **CHECK THE FACTS**

Seek out reliable information so you can be grounded in the facts. Credible resources include the [Centers for Disease Control](#) or the [World Health Organization](#). People may be surprised to learn that, despite Coronavirus being quite transmissible, it is **far less deadly** than SARS was. Another helpful consideration: **Far more people are affected by the flu every year**, and the same reasonable precautions apply. This outbreak is a reminder to follow the same guidelines we are typically told to follow during flu season that keep us protected year-round.

### LIMIT MEDIA CONSUMPTION AS NEEDED

While it's important to stay informed, fixating on the news may worsen existing worries and trigger unproductive stress and anxiety. If you find that your level of coronavirus-related news consumption is causing undue stress without adding any utility, limit your frequency of checking the news and avoid the news before bedtime. If the news becomes especially overwhelming, consider taking a break from consuming news media for a period of time.

### GET TO KNOW YOUR THINKING TRAPS

If you're operating on good information and taking reasonable precautions, but still struggling with worry and fear, you might consider getting to know your patterns of thinking that may cause unhelpful anxiety, also known as **thinking traps**. If one of your thinking traps is catastrophizing, for example, you may find yourself vividly imagining worst-case scenarios and treating them as if they're inevitable. Or if you're prone to the trap called black-and-white thinking, you might view coronavirus news either exclusively in terms of doom-and-gloom, or with unrealistic positivity.

Being aware of your thinking traps could help you develop a healthier reaction to coronavirus news.

### WHEN TO CONSIDER LYRA

If you find that your thoughts, emotions, or behaviors are making it difficult to function in your daily life, and your usual coping strategies aren't working, consider professional mental health support from Lyra.

Lyra Health is available to support you. Reach out to our care team today:

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