



Your guide to coping with
STRESS
during **COVID-19**

For more information, call **1300 523 985** or visit **centacarecq.com**



Coping Mechanisms



Most of the time, children and teenagers will mirror similar reactions to the behaviours of adults around them.

When parents and caregivers deal with **COVID-19** calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

Not all children and teenagers respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include:

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Returning to behaviours they have outgrown (for example: toileting accidents or bed wetting)
- Excessive worrying or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teenagers
- Poor school performance or avoiding school
- Difficulty keeping attention and concentrating
- Avoidance of activities once enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

There are a number of ways you can support your child or teenager.

- **Take time** to talk with your them about the **COVID-19** outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about **COVID-19** in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- **Reassure** your child or teenager that they are safe. Let them know it is OK if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- **Limit** your family's exposure to all news coverage of the event, including social media. **Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.**
- **Keep up with regular routines.** If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities, relaxing or fun activities.
- **Be a role model.** Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members safely via phone or online

During times of stress, there are actions you can take to support how you manage it. Coping mechanisms seek to master, minimise or tolerate stress and stressors that occur.



More coping **Mechanisms**



First Responders

Responding to COVID-19 can take an emotional toll on you. There are things you can do to reduce **Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)** reactions:

- Acknowledge that STS can impact anyone helping families after a traumatic event.
- Learn the symptoms including physical (fatigue, illness) and mental (fear, withdrawal, guilt).
- Allow time for you and your family to recover from responding to the pandemic.
- Create a menu of personal self-care activities that you enjoy, such as spending time with friends and family, exercising, or reading a book.
- Take a break from media coverage of **COVID-19**.
- Ask for help if you feel overwhelmed or concerned that **COVID-19** is affecting your ability to care for your family and patients as you did before the outbreak.



For Everyone

Follow these helpful hints to reduce your stress.

- Maintain a routine and purpose
- Practice self-care including mindfulness and meditation
- Remain engaged with health professionals
- Stay connected with friends and family via phone or online
- Stick to the facts not fake news
- Do not watch the news over and over again
- Exercise
- Eat well
- Sleep
- Prioritise your responsibilities
- Focus on the basics
- Talk about your problems even if they cannot be solved

Coping with **STRESS**

Every one reacts to stress in their own individual way.

A person's ability to cope, can be impacted by a number of factors including previous experience, genetics, social supports, thinking styles and purpose. There are, however, some common symptoms of stress. The table below provides **physical, thinking, feeling** and **behavioural** descriptions of some of these symptoms.

| Physical | Thinking | Feeling | Behavioural |
|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nausea / sickness Upset stomach Tremors Feeling uncoordinated Seating Diarrhea Dizziness Rapid heartbeat Rapid breathing Headaches Muscle aches Difficulty sleeping Fatigue Restlessness Inactivity Withdrawal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slowed thinking Difficulty making decisions Confusion Difficulty concentrating Memory problems Thinking of the event over and over Distressing Dreams Poor attention span Job dissatisfaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety Fear Guilt Grief Depression Feeling lost Feeling abandoned Feeling isolated Worrying about others Wanting to hide Anger Irritability Feeling numb Startled easily Shocked | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nail biting Constant thoughts about stressors Restlessness Teeth grinding Disrupted sleep, diet and exercise Interpersonal conflict Social withdrawal Substance use and procrastination |

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