

Things to consider as we take care of ourselves and loved ones during this time.

Stay informed using trusted sources, as to not flood yourself or your family with glorified news/media time. Trusted sources include: **Center for Disease Control, World Health Organization, and Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress**. In our clinical opinion, check one of these trusted sources only a few times a day, and not right before you go to bed. Ideally, you do not want to process information that is fear based as you are preparing for your night routine. This can impact sleep hygiene, which has negative side effects on your brain, body, and emotional capacity. The situation is changing constantly, so limited checking is adequate to get your information and at the same time not overwhelm yourself. Keep the news off for your children's sake. The above trusted resources update regularly and help filter out the entertainment and sensationalized aspect of the news. This can help you from being consumed and more anxious given constant inundation of inaccurate information throughout your day.

It is also important to work on calming yourself down, for your own well-being and that of your children, if you have them. Your children will respond based on their perception of your stress and anxiety levels. Try not to address the Coronavirus when you are upset. Once you are calm, talk directly, with limited information, in age appropriate ways. We have listed two resources to help frame those conversations in productive ways. <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/> and <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/coronavirus-how-to-talk-to-kids-disease | 5e5c615ac5b601022113151d>

Our goal for clients is to conduct their day as typically as they would, which can be very hard during this time. Go for walks to reduce stress and anxiety naturally, and try to keep yourself calm using deep breaths, as when our brain is hijacked with fear, we cannot think clearly and we need more oxygen to settle our systems. Remember the intense power of your thoughts. Common thinking patterns that can be very problematic in times like these are; catastrophizing, which takes us to the worst possible scenario in any given situation, and over generalizing which makes us think that terrible outcomes are much more likely to occur and it can feel in our body like they will. To combat this, we can try to catch ourselves when we go down a path of unhelpful or extreme thinking. "Is this thought helpful to me right now?" is a great question to ask yourself. It's important to remember what we can and cannot control. Try to stick to regular sleep and wake times. Humans benefit from routines in many ways.

Create a plan for yourself and your family when you are in a clear state of mind to help manage stress and anxiety. Write it down so that in case of a crisis, you can rely on your list when it can be hard to think clearly. These things could include important work contacts, doctor's names and information, the medications you or your family take, food or other supplies that may be essential to your family over a short period of time. "Calm begets calm." If you can be calm, you can communicate that to your loved ones in times of crisis. Stay socially connected safely. While we believe social distancing is imperative right now to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, that does not mean limiting connection! Quite the opposite, we are coming together during a time of crisis in new ways. Reach out differently; use Google Duo, Zoom, Skype or FaceTime, connect via phone, use humor and levity, have group calls, let people know in some way that you are

thinking of them. Let's come together and increase our connection and engagement with each other. We will need to adjust our definition for a period of time, and can touch people in new transformative ways.