Coping with Anxiety in a Time of Pandemic

It's hard to get away from the continuous news cycle about COVID-19 and what that might mean for ourselves and our communities. The daily updates and the new—sometimes extreme—precautions enacted to protect communities from infection can certainly lead to fear and anxiety. It's natural to be concerned about what's happening with things like the coronavirus, where the virus will spread and fear and anxiety about the threat it poses to ourselves and our loved ones now and in the future but now some find themselves asking... SHOULD I BE WORRIED ABOUT WORRYING TOO MUCH?!!

Although feeling anxiety in response to a threat is a normal human reaction, sustained high anxiety can undermine constructive responses to the crisis. When fear and anxiety are excessive, or when they get in the way of one's ability to function on an everyday basis—such as social relationships and staying on top of tasks from school or work—those are cues signaling that one may be experiencing clinical levels of anxiety. People who already suffer from anxiety and related disorders are especially likely to have a hard time during the coronavirus crisis.

So, what can we do?? This may sound crazy, but allow your anxious thoughts, feelings and physical sensations to wash over you, accepting anxiety as an integral part of human experience. Anxiety rises proportionally to how much one tries to get rid of it. Struggling against anxiety can take many forms. People might try to distract themselves by drinking, eating or watching Netflix more than usual. They might repeatedly seek reassurance from friends, family or health experts. Or they might obsessively check news streams, hoping to calm their fears. Although these behaviors can help momentarily, they can make anxiety worse in the long run. Avoiding the experience of anxiety almost always backfires.

When waves of coronavirus anxiety show up, notice and describe the experience to yourself or others without judgment. Resist the urge to escape or calm your fears by obsessively reading virus updates. Don't get sucked into overestimating the threat. And remember that we become more anxious when faced with situations that have no clear precedent. Be mindful that you are more resilient than you think!!

Facing anxiety in the moment will lead to less anxiety over time.
GREAT INFORMATION FROM OUR FORT DRUM
CHILD AND FAMILY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (CAFBHS) COLLEAGUES!!

The COVID-19 response has required that our families adjust to a new normal. Adjusting to new routines can be challenging, but things like open communication and structure can assist parents and children in successfully adapting to change. These two links offer excellent suggestions on ways that can assist us all in successfully adapting to a new normal.

—he From Uniformed Services University Center for Traumatic Stress- Helping Homebound Children during COVID-19 Outbreak:
https://www.cstsonline.org/assets/media/documents STS_FS_Helping_Homebound_Children_during_COVID19 Outbreak.pdf
—he From Uniformed Services University Center for Traumatic Stress- Taking Care of Your Family During Coronavirus:

— SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO!! MAY/JUNE/JULY WORKSHOPS!! —

NEW! Mindful Time Out
7 May 20
ASAP bldg. 10250, Room F
Join Christine, in a relaxed environment, for a cup of coffee or tea at the start your day and emerge revitalized and inspired, equipped with new tools to continue to be productive & enjoy your day. Drinks provided! No need to register!

Stone Art Therapy
7, 12, 20, 26 May 20—1130-1300
ASAP bldg. 10250, Room F
Take a break from current stressors and come do a little art therapy with the EAPC. Walk away with your new treasure and tools to use to work through anxieties to de-stress over the lunch hour. ALL WELCOME! No need to register!

safeTALK (Suicide Alertness for Everyone)
Fri, 15 May 20—0900-1200/1300-1600
Fri, 10 Jul 20—0900-1200/1300-1600
ASAP bldg. 10250, Room H
(contact EAPC to register—772-2597)
Empowering Suicide Prevention training that prepares anyone (age 15+) to connect people with suicidal thoughts to mental health resources. Min. of 10 participants & Max of 30.

Stress Triggers & Resilience Builders
3rd Tues of every month!
Tues, 19 May 20—0900-1100
ASAP bldg. 10250, Room F
(contact EAPC to register—772-2597)
Join the EAPC for an interactive workshop on identifying your triggers and walk away with tools to help manage those while building resilience to make it through everyday issues.

Chillin’ Out—Anger Management
Thu, 28 May 20—0900-1000
ASAP bldg. 10250, Room F
(contact EAPC—772-2597 or FAP—772-5914 to register)
Small group setting designed for support in understanding what stressors trigger certain reactions and how to minimize the effects of those stressors in a positive & healthy way.