

Dealing with Anxiety Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

With the global health crisis related to the novel coronavirus (also known as COVID-19), we are aware of the potential impact on many in our community at SU. Understandably, stress and anxiety can arise in the midst of uncertainty or fears about your health, or a loved one's health. Some students may feel stigmatized or experience racist and/or xenophobic remarks by those fearful of contracting the virus.

Reach out to the Counseling Center if you or someone else that you know are experiencing any of the following:

- Excessive worry, fear, anxiety, and feelings of being overwhelmed
- Persistent sadness, tearfulness, and/or loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or paralyzing fear about the future
- Unexplained physical symptoms, such as an upset stomach, increased heart rate, nausea, fatigue, etc.
- Increased anger, irritability, agitation and/or disruptive behaviors
- Inability to concentrate or focus
- Significant changes in sleep, appetite and/or self-care.
- Social isolation or withdrawal
- Fear or avoidance of public spaces
- Unhealthy coping (e.g. increased substance abuse, engaging in risky/impulsive behavior, etc.)

Tips for Managing Emotional/Psychological Distress

Acknowledge your feelings and emotions. Allow yourself time to reflect on what you are feeling and how you may be reacting to any fears and uncertainties of the future.

Maintain your normal day-to-day activities and routines. Resist withdrawing and isolating yourself. Maintaining social connections can foster a sense of normality and provide valuable opportunities for sharing your feelings and relieving stress.

Seek accurate information from credible news sources. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, for example, has a webpage dedicated to providing factual information on the novel coronavirus. You may also find useful information from local or state public health agencies.

Limit exposure to fear-based media by choosing 1-2 trusted news outlets that do not provide any new information and/or sensationalizes the facts. Pay attention to positive news instead of only focusing on negative and fear-producing reports.

Follow protection and prevention tips provided by qualified medical professionals, including from TU Health Center.

Practice calming rituals. Stay grounded in the present moment, which can help you maintain an internal sense of stability and balance when other parts of your life feel out of control.

Seek out and utilize on-campus resources. Reach out to friends and family, talk to an RA, a campus ministry, a professor, a staff member. Consider coming to the Counseling Center to speak with a professional counselor if your distress does not seem to be lessening. We are here to help!

Mutual Trust, Respect and Civility

Fear and anxiety can lead to mistrust, bias, prejudice, and discrimination, which we are committed to proactively combating. In an effort to avoid stigmatizing and promote mutual trust and respect within our community, we urge you to practice the following:

- Be mindful of your behavior, thoughts, beliefs, and or biases about others from another country
- Avoid generalizing anyone who is sick as potentially having the coronavirus
- Be cautious about the images that are shared. Make sure they do not reinforce stereotypes
- Examine any irrational or rigid thoughts that can exist when there is uncertainty
- Practice and seek health care if you believe you are sick
- Listen and attend to each other with empathy, kindness, and compassion

(Adapted to Towson University coronavirus resources 2020)