

# Healthy Coping in Difficult Times

April 8, 2020

CancerCare Manitoba recognizes the stress due to COVID-19 and the impact on patients, their families and community members. This is an unprecedented time where stress and anxiety are normal reactions to the pandemic.

Below are some suggestions for healthy coping, as well as helpful links. If you have any questions or concerns about your health or well-being, make sure you discuss them with your health care provider or contact our Psychosocial Oncology department at (204) 787-2109.

## Steps toward healthy coping:

- Accept and allow for your emotions. Know that it is normal and valid to feel anxious, scared, angry, lonely or helpless sometimes. At other times, you might also feel generous and appreciative of others.
  - o Everyone deals with difficult feelings differently. Try writing down your thoughts, talking to someone you trust, meditation, going for a walk, doing a puzzle or an art project, cleaning and organizing, or exercising at home.
  - o You may also want to try to find at least three things to be grateful for every day, no matter how big or small.
- Remember that you have been able to manage stress in the past. Even though this pandemic is a new situation, you have gotten through difficult times before. Draw upon these experiences.
- Limit the sources of stress. For example, by limiting the amount of news you watch. Also make sure the news is from a reliable local source. Stay informed with credible websites and resources such as those listed below. Keep your screen time to 1-2 hours per day, and turn off all electronic devices at least two hours before bedtime.
- Make self-care a priority. Drink enough water, eat healthy meals and find new ways to exercise. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, ensuring that you get enough sleep. Even if you are isolating at home, establish a routine for your day and your week.
- Stay connected with loved ones through phone calls and video chats. If needed, reach out to your health care providers and counsellors at CancerCare Manitoba. Check in with anyone who might be isolated or vulnerable.

**For more ideas on coping, visit:**

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#)

[Harvard University](#)

[Carleton University](#) (for financial guidance)

[Virtual Hospice](#)

[Kid's Health](#) (for supporting children)

[World Health Organization](#) (for supporting children)

**For credible and current information on the COVID-19 pandemic, visit:**

**Government of Manitoba:**

[www.manitoba.ca/covid19](http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19)

[www.manitoba.ca/covid19/bewell/index.html](http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19/bewell/index.html)

[Government of Canada](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

**Contact Patient and Family Support Services for more information:**

Phone: 204-787-2109

Toll-Free 1-866-561-1026

Email [pfssinquiry@cancercare.mb.ca](mailto:pfssinquiry@cancercare.mb.ca)