



Practice Self-Regulation™

A Trauma-Informed Approach for Health and Well Being

Managing Stress During COVID-19

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Feeling bombarded by everything COVID? You're not alone! Trying to keep track of everything relevant to keeping ourselves and those we care about safe is dizzying. The impact of COVID-19, the economic meltdown, and social distancing are so easily overwhelming it's difficult to think straight and to sort things out in any cohesive way. Let alone practice healthy coping strategies throughout every challenge.

You may have heard about this science and these tips before. We think they are worth repeating during this time.

1. When the brain, mind, and body become overloaded by stress hormones pumping through our body it can be very difficult to think straight and stay organized in the face of upheaval, fear, and multiple sources of pressure.
2. We have three general categories of physiological response. They are: fight, flight, and freeze. If you don't already know your general patterns for managing upsetting experiences, take a few minutes to reflect on any patterns you can identify when you're getting upset and feeling out of control. You may have one habit in particular, or a variety of any of the three.
3. Pay close attention to whether you think they are relatively healthy responses, or things that might make matters worse.
4. For any healthy coping strategies that come to mind, think about how you might bolster them to help your brain, mind, and body calm down.
5. We know that slowing our brain down through deep breathing to the count of five for both an inhale and an exhale can balance our system's braking and accelerating functions. Deep breathing really does help!
6. Making a list of a variety of easy coping strategies can make it easier to practice one when the going gets tough. You might want to keep the list on a Post-it note for easy reference.
7. If you realize from Number 2, that you're not practicing healthy coping skills, consider making a list of anything you might be willing to practice in order to change habits when the going gets tough.
8. Think of anyone who might support your efforts to take better care of yourself when life is feeling out of control and ask them for any support that might be helpful.
9. Make sure any list of healthy coping strategies includes soothing multi-sensory experiences and body movement.
10. To paraphrase Ian McCowan, "Be kind [to yourself and others] for everyone is fighting hard battles".