

## Coping with Stress and Anxiety

The COVID-19 pandemic can cause stress and anxiety because it is disrupting normal life for many people all at once. While it is important to be informed and to take action to limit the spread of infection, the amount of information and attention on this topic can increase stress and anxiety. It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.

### How to cope with stress and anxiety:

**Find a balance:** Stay tuned in, but know when to take a breather

- Set aside some time to unplug from all distractions. Distractions from stress/anxiety are not as effective and can cause temporary relief such as screen time and watching tv.
- Limit worry and potential anxiety by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.
- Ensure you get information from credible and accurate sources such as:
  - The World Health Organization
  - Health Canada
  - Ontario Ministry of Health
  - Your local public health unit



### Recognize when you need help and seek support

- FSEAP is a resource to help address any mental health, anxiety, stress, isolation or other needs. FSEAP is strictly confidential and Stelco pays for the number of employees who use the service monthly.
  - [www.fseap.ca](http://www.fseap.ca)
  - **1.800.668.9920**
- Share how you are feeling with your supervisor, coworkers, family, and friends.
- Reduce the stigma and create an environment for open conversations.
- Keep an eye on each other and check-in.
- Monitor each other's workloads. Encourage each other to take breaks.
- With the person's permission, share facts, try to listen and empathize.
- Connect with family and friends.



### Practice relaxation and meditation

- Formal mediation.
- Breathing techniques.
- Read a book.
- Listen to music.
- Seek any activity you find enjoyable.
- Bond with your pet.
- Write in a journal.

### Stay Healthy

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule and avoid naps during the day if they interrupt your sleep.
- Eating healthily can help us feel better. Choose more fruits/vegetables and avoid comfort foods.
- Avoid substance use - including smoking, vaping, caffeine and alcohol.
- Physical activity is a great way to reduce stress and anxiety and improve our mood and overall health.

This time may be very challenging for children and adolescents, some of whom might not understand the reasons for school closures and the cancellation of extracurricular activities. Young people may also sense the anxiety of their parents, and worry about their own health and that of other family members. Children need to be reassured in a way that is age appropriate. As a first step, you may consider a family meeting to:

- Acknowledge their fears.
- Explain the overall risk of getting the virus and what happens if they do get sick.
- Outline the steps you are taking to keep them and yourself safe during this pandemic.
- Reassure them that young children tend to get a mild form of the virus.
- Discuss any questions they may have.

