

Sheltering in place, practicing social distancing, and reading/listening to news reports about COVID-19 are making some people anxious. Here are some tips to help you manage your anxiety, put news reports in perspective, and maintain a positive outlook.

### **Tips**

- **Seek accurate information.** It is helpful to adopt a more clinical and curious approach as you follow news reports about the virus. To that end, you will want to find a credible source you can trust. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization have webpages dedicated to information on COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html> or <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>). Limit exposure to social media and news reports that provide no new information or inaccurate information.
- **Keep things in perspective.** Take a deep breath and remind yourself that you are remaining vigilant and are prepared. In addition to keeping up on coronavirus news, pay attention to other positive news instead of only focusing on what may be negative and fear-producing reports.
- **Acknowledge reactions.** Allow yourself time to reflect on what you are feeling and how you may be reacting to any fears and uncertainties.
- **Maintain your normal day-to-day activities and keep connected.** Resist withdrawing and isolating yourself beyond social distancing or shelter in place guidelines or orders. Virtually maintaining social networks can foster a sense of normality and provide valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress. Feel free to share useful information you find on governmental websites with your friends and family. It will help them deal with their own anxiety.
- **Follow the prevention and protection tips given by medical professionals.** Besides information through credible sources mentioned above, you may also find useful information from local or state public health agencies or your family physician.
- **Practice calming rituals.** Stay grounded in the present moment, which can help you maintain an internal sense of stability and balance when outside events feel threatening.
- **Seek support.** Reach out to friends and family and learn about free community resources that are available. The State of Illinois offers the free, 24/7 Call4Calm Text Line. Text TALK to 552020 for English or HABLAR for Spanish. People seeking assistance will remain anonymous and will provide only their first name and zip code, which enables the service to link you to a counselor in your area who is knowledgeable about available local resources. For life-threatening emergencies, always call 911.

### **Avoid Stigmatizing or Generalizing**

- Be aware of your behavior or attitude change towards others from another country and avoid stigmatizing.
- Avoid generalizing anyone who is stuck as potentially having the Coronavirus.
- Examine any irrational or rigid thoughts that can exist when there is uncertainty.

### **Recognizing Distress – A Self Check List**

- Increased anxiety, worry, fear, and feelings of being overwhelmed
- Depressive symptoms that persist and/or intensify
- Inability to focus or concentrate accompanied by decreased academic or work performance or performance of other daily activities
- Sleep difficulties
- Excessive crying
- Isolating or withdrawing from others, fear of going into public situations
- Unhealthy coping (e.g., increased alcohol or drug use, engaging in risky/impulsive behaviors)
- A feeling of hopelessness and/or a paralyzing fear about the future
- Sudden anger and disruptive behaviors or noticeable changes in personality

### **Benedictine University Resources**

#### **Dean of Students Office**

630-829-6006

#### **Student Health Services**

630-829-6046

#### **Counseling Center**

630-829-1800

#### **University Police**

Emergency: Dial 911

Non-Emergency: 630-829-6122

Adapted from University of Indianapolis – “Psychological Tips for Managing Coronavirus Concerns” (<https://www.uindy.edu/studentcounseling/scc-news-updates>) & American Psychological Association – “Five Ways to View Coverage of the Coronavirus” (<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/pandemics>).