

Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19

Taking care of yourself during these stressful and uncertain times

As the situation with COVID-19 (Coronavirus) continues to evolve feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and fear can be overwhelming. Students, faculty, and staff are dealing with sudden changes to their regular schedules and worry about what comes next for themselves, friends and family. These developments can be stressful and cause strong emotions, including but not limited to:

- Fear and worry about your own health and that of your friends and family, locally, nationally and abroad
- Uncertainty, confusion and vulnerability with a rapidly changing situation
- Anxiety, worry, panic over what is known and unknown
- Feeling helpless and unsure of what to do
- Social withdrawal and isolation

It's completely expected to experience a wide range of emotions during situations like these. Stress manifests in many different ways so making sure you're taking care of different parts of yourself like your mind, body, and emotional and spiritual well-being can help to lower stress when feeling overwhelmed.

Notice and honor how you feel while also taking care of your emotional health. Remember to:

- **Stay Informed and get the facts** with the latest health and campus information at uhs.berkeley.edu/coronavirus and sites like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO).
- **Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage** of COVID-19.
- **Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will peak or pass.** Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories.
- **Keep your immune system healthy.** Practice healthy hygiene including frequent hand washing, covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Avoid contact with others who are sick, and if you are sick stay home and do not travel.
- **Practice self-care.** Self-care is a necessary human regulatory function. Take deep breaths, drink lots of water, stretch or practice mindfulness. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise, get plenty of sleep and avoid alcohol and drugs. Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking.
- **Remaining socially connected to friends and family is important.** While keeping a responsible radius with others and avoiding large crowded areas is recommended to help prevent the spread of germs, it's important to stay connected in other ways. Maintaining your social networks provides valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress.
- **Support each other and the community.** Be kind to yourself and others, we are all in this together. Help our campus communities find ways to address anxieties proactively so that we encourage inclusion and discourage xenophobia.
- **Recognize that everyone copes differently and that everyone's circumstances are unique.** For some of you that may mean too much solitary time and for others no alone time at all. Some of you may be able to go home for Spring break, and others may not due to travel restrictions and resources. Be curious about what you need to cope at this time and compassionate about what others maybe needing.
- **Seek additional help.** Individuals who feel an overwhelming worry or anxiety can seek additional professional mental health support.

Resources and Support

Counseling Support at UHS for Students:

- To talk to a counselor at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): call (510) 642-9494.
- See uhs.berkeley.edu/caps for more information about accessing care
- If you need to speak with a counselor urgently when the Tang Center is closed, please call the 24/7 counseling line at (855) 817-5667

Teladoc

Students with SHIP can also use Teladoc to speak to a mental health professional 24/7 through your phone, tablet, computer. It's a good way to receive support virtually while minimizing the risk of exposure/spreading. uhs.berkeley.edu/teladoc

If you don't have SHIP insurance, check with your health care provider for similar options to connect with counselors.

TAO (Therapy Assisted Online) and Mobile App

An online library of engaging, interactive programs that help you manage feelings of stress and anxiety during these times. Visit uhs.berkeley.edu/tao to get started.

Educational modules to consider:

- Let Go and Be Well
- Calming Your Worry-Student
- Improving Your Mood
- Leaving Your Blues Behind

For Faculty & Staff:

Be Well at Work Employee Assistance is available for confidential support. Telephone consultations and appointments can be made by calling (510) 643-7754 or emailing employeeassistance@berkeley.edu