

# MENTAL WELLBEING

Managing the Impact of COVID-19 (May 1, 2020)

## FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL RESOURCES

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/>
- **Health Canada:**  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada.html>
- **World Health Organization:**  
<https://www.who.int/>



## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This news has placed global populations on alert causing varied reactions. It is normal during this time of uncertainty for us to speculate on the potential spread of the virus and to experience understandable reactions from worry to anxiety about this health concern.

## WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE REACTIONS?

- **Emotional reactions:** Fear, anxiety, distress, anger, irritability, sadness, guilt, and uncertainty
- **Mental reactions:** Disbelief about the extent of the outbreak, loss of concentration, fearful thoughts about travelling, forgetfulness, indecisiveness, confusion, distressing dream
- **Physical reactions:** Numbness, shock, headaches, loss of appetite, sleep difficulties, fatigue, nausea, and gastrointestinal problems
- **Behavioral reactions:** Tearfulness, feeling disconnected, withdrawal or isolation from the mainstream population, increased tendency to blame or criticize others

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*“Self-care is how you take your power back”*

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## DO THESE REACTIONS ALWAYS OCCUR AFTER HEARING NEWS OF AN OUTBREAK?

Not always. Everyone experiences reactions in a way that is unique to themselves and their situation. When a viral outbreak occurs a long way away, the perceived risk can be viewed as less concerning. If you or someone you know is in closer proximity to an outbreak location, this can trigger a stronger reaction to the news. Some individuals experience delayed reactions, as a result of exposure to the news over time and this can invoke a growing sense of fear and anxiety

## IS THERE ANY WAY TO AVOID THESE TYPES OF REACTIONS?

You can never avoid them completely. Even individuals who are well-informed and well-prepared may experience acute reactions in such situations. Remember that these are normal reactions.



## ARE THESE REACTIONS “NORMAL”?

Absolutely. These are normal reactions that human beings experience when they are in abnormally distressing situations. Research has shown that when you acknowledge anxiety and take care of it, it will usually diminish within a few weeks.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR CONCERN REACTIONS DON'T DIMINISH FROM WEEK TO WEEK?

It's better not to keep the worrying thoughts and anxiety all to yourself. People close to you don't always know how to help despite their best intentions. If these reactions have not diminished from week to week, don't hesitate to contact ComPsych TRCA's [Employee Assistance Program](#) for support. If you take good care of yourself and ensure that you obtain the support you need, you will gradually regain your normal sense of self.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- ✓ Pay more attention to your feelings and reactions than to the event itself.
- ✓ Don't judge or blame yourself. Don't criticize yourself for having these reactions. Be patient. Think about how you would support a friend in this situation and then treat yourself the same way.
- ✓ Take the time to talk about your physical and emotional reactions with someone close to you like a friend, partner or loved one. You can also turn to your coworkers for support.
- ✓ Let your family, colleagues and friends know how they could best support you during these difficult times.
- ✓ Some people find it helpful to keep busy (leisure activities, hobbies, routine chores, physical exercise, etc.), while others find it helpful to relax.
- ✓ Try to avoid saturation from exposure to the constant media coverage of this news.
- ✓ Take the time to rest and maintain good sleep habits.