



# Managing your Mental Health

## Right now, many of us are worried about COVID-19.

We may feel helpless about what will happen or what we can do. When things feel uncertain or when we don't generally feel safe, it's normal to feel stressed. Stress can be a normal reaction, but sometimes it can also take a toll on our mental health.

We don't always know that it's happening. You might feel more on edge than usual, angry, helpless or sad. You might notice that you are more frustrated with others or want to completely avoid any reminders of what is happening. For those of us who already struggle with our mental wellness, we might feel more depressed or less motivated to carry out our daily activities.

Focusing on physical and mental wellness is important at this time. The information on the next page are some strategies that may help with the day-to-day stress during this crisis.

## RESOURCES



**Florida Poly  
Care Manager**  
Kristin Stokes  
[care@floridapoly.edu](mailto:care@floridapoly.edu)  
863-874-8599

**BayCare Services**  
[BayCareSAP@BayCare.org](mailto:BayCareSAP@BayCare.org)  
800-878-5470



- **Unplug:** Turn off the television and put down your phone. Non-stop media coverage can be overwhelming and have a negative impact on your emotional wellbeing. Use your time to practice mindfulness, take a walk, or talk to friends and family.
- **Practice Gratitude:** Take a moment to reflect on the positive. Gratitude doesn't need to be reserved for momentous occasions like winning a prize. You can also be thankful for having good friends, having fun playing video games or finding forgotten money in a pocket.
- **Rethink Control:** Separate what is in your control from what is not. There are things you can do, and it's helpful to focus on those. Wash your hands. Remind others to wash theirs. Take your vitamins. Control your consumption of media and social platforms.
- **Safety:** Do what helps you feel a sense of safety. This will be different for everyone, and it's important not to compare yourself to others. It's ok if you've decided what makes you feel safe is to limit attendance of large social events, but make sure you separate when you are isolating based on potential for sickness versus isolating because it's part of depression.
- **Get Outside in Nature:** As we practice social distance and avoiding crowds, remember to take a walk outside. A short time outside in the sunshine helps with Vitamin D absorption and it can feel good to get fresh air. Remember, exercise also helps both your physical and mental health!
- **Stay in the Present:** Challenge yourself to stay in the present. Perhaps your worry is compounding—you are not only thinking about what is currently happening, but also projecting into the future. When you find yourself worrying about something that hasn't happened, gently bring yourself back to the present moment. Notice the sights, sounds, tastes and other sensory experiences in your immediate moment and name them.
- **Mindfulness:** Engaging in mindfulness activities is one way to help stay grounded when things feel beyond your control. This could include listening to music, read a book, playing with a pet or engaging in something creative.
- **Reach Out:** Social distancing doesn't mean you have to cut yourself off from family or friends. Connect with friends and family on the phone or through social media to let them know you care. These contacts can soothe your spirit and theirs. Stay connected and reach out if you need more support. Talk to trusted friends about what you are feeling. If you are feeling particularly anxious or if you are struggling with your mental health, it's ok to reach out to a mental health professional for support. You don't have to be alone with your worry and it can be comforting to share what you are experiencing with those trained to help.