

# STAYING CALM & COPING WITH STRESS

Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic



**COVID-19 is affecting many communities around the world, and now that it has touched home, it is natural that we experience fear and anxiety around it.**

Here are some customized recommendations from counsellors at HIM that can be helpful for us to cope with these stressful times:



## Follow Prevention Measures

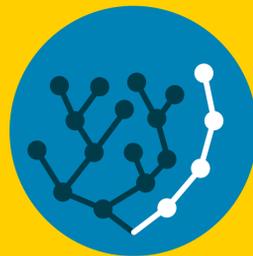
Behaviours like social distancing, hand washing, and self-isolation drastically reduce the chances of becoming sick with COVID-19; or passing it to others, and will give you the peace of mind of doing what you can.

*If perfectionism takes over, remind yourself that you are doing the best you can with what you have in the moment.*

## Be Realistic

Sometimes our mind tends to catastrophize and tell us that the worst thing will happen. The fact is, COVID-19 is a threat to our communities, but it does not mean that everyone will get it and all our lives will be threatened by it.

*Acknowledging the facts and realities, instead of ignoring them, will help you make informed decisions.*



## Connect with Others

Mobility is reduced, but we can still connect with others remotely by phone or other means. Stay in touch with your loved ones, check in with them about this, but also about other things you usually would talk about.

*Fear and shame can encourage us to hide, or disconnect. Defy fear and shame by reaching out for connection.*

## Be Kind to Yourself

In difficult times it is natural to feel anxious or lost. During these times we might put a lot of pressure to accomplish unrealistic goals, or push ourselves to maintain all of our usual habits in order to force ourselves to feel better.

*Acknowledge your feelings, it is okay to have them, and they are real.*

*Give yourself some space and time to adjust to a new situation, and treat yourself with kindness.*



## Be Kind to Others

We all adapt and adjust differently, and it is not a linear process. Let others find their own way to adapt.

*Being kind to others while we all adjust will make the process easier for everyone.*

## Practice Acceptance

Many of us have a hard time accepting things we don't like. Even if we wish this situation was not happening, it is. And yes, there is uncertainty, and change involved.

*Try to remember that change is part of life, and we are and will accommodate and adjust to this situation. We may not know the future or how it will unfold, but we know that we will be able to adjust and learn from it.*



## Unplug Sometimes

Social distancing can create boredom, and we can be easily drawn to our phones and other media to distract us.

*Take frequent breaks from media-based COVID-19 content (memes included), and think about limiting the time you spend browsing daily.*

## Find Pleasure and Fun at Home

For those of us who are finding ourselves with some extra time, it can be easy to fill that time with pacing and panic.

*Give yourself permission to laugh, and find things that make you feel good – it's not silly, it's healthy.*



## Tune Into Your Body

Try to get out of your head – when we think too much, we convince our body that it is in danger, and we feel anxious as a result. Try to slow down your brain by tuning into your body and being mindful of the sensations in your body.

*Stretch, breathe, move your body, absorb sunlight and breathe fresh air (if possible), drink water, get enough sleep, and eat as well as you can.*

If you are struggling, HIM is still offering counselling programs through phone/video calls. Please contact [counselling@checkhimout.ca](mailto:counselling@checkhimout.ca) if you would like to be connected to a counsellor. Learn more at:

[www.checkhimout.ca/mind](http://www.checkhimout.ca/mind)

**If you are in immediate need of assistance, and/or are experiencing severe thoughts of suicide, you may consider calling the Crisis Centre 1-800-784-2433**

For more info, please visit [checkhimout.ca/covid19](http://checkhimout.ca/covid19)