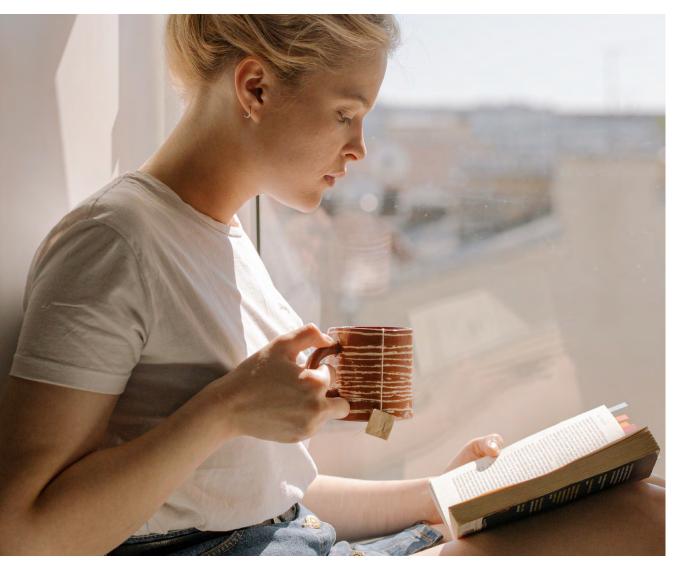*FETA Füzetek*

Tips for coping with stress and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic

Covid

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The situation caused by the coronavirus epidemic presents many challenges for all of us. For many, dealing with the uncertainty of the situation is the most difficult and it can be an increased burden for those who originally tend to worry.

Many unexpected changes have occurred at once in many areas of our lives:

> housing(for dorm students)

> studying (full transition to distance education)

> difficulties in staying connetcted, isolation

> narrowing of recreational opportunities

> fear of losing jobs, a possible existential crisis derived from that

Adapting to these changes can be mentally challenging. It is completely normal to feel anxious, vulnerable and helpless in the current situation. However, it is important to realize that we do have the means to deal with feeling of excessive stress and anxiety. Consciously paying attention to the following areas can help us cope better during this difficult period.

Limit news and information

It is very important to avoid the „overconsumption" of news related to the epidemic. Choose one or two reliable sources of information, and then make the decision to check it only up to twice a day. Monitoring related news appearing on social media more than twice a day can lead to increased anxiety.

Structure your days

Try to stick to your usual schedule and daily routine as much as possible. It can help if you do not change the time you'd normally wake up in the morning and go to bed at night, and try to bring regularity into your activities. Keeping boundaries between your private life and your work/studies in terms of both workspace and working/studying hours is also of utmost importance.

Focus and control

Try to focus on things that you can control! These include complying with hygienic rules and following other recommendations. Focusing on things which are not under our control, such as the nature of the epidemic or the behaviour of others can lead to increased anxiety.

Relations

Keeping in touch with our loved ones, friends, classmates and colleagues is of utmost importance in this period. Even though we don't have the chance to meet up in person now, social media provides a great opportunity in maintaining our relationships. Not only does the feeling of being connected significantly improve our well-being, it also helps us be more aware that we are in this special situation together.

Exercise

Despite the limited possibilities exercising – besides its other positive aspects- can enhance the feeling of physical control, which can be important in the current situation. Now we have the opportunity to learn indoor exercises (e.g.: yoga, gymnastics, strength training) which we haven't had the chance to try before.

Recreational activities

It is also important to add joyful, recreational activities into our days at home. These can include drawing, crafts, music, reading, watching movies or series, learning languages, cooking, board games, online games, etc., the list is basically endless.

Stress management

It is worth trying (if it has not been a part of our daily routine, yet) relaxation, meditation, mindfulness or breathing exercises. Various stress reducing excercises and applications are available free of charge on the Internet. (e.g.: headspace, calm)

Here is an example of a simple stress relieving exercise:

> Breathe slowly through your nose into your stomach.

> Say to yourself, „My body is getting filled up with calmness" and then exhale slowly.

> Repeat this slowly five times.

> Do it as many times as needed.

Giving help

At the moment we are all in a similar situation. We are already doing social service by staying at home for a while. It is important to realize that accepting quarantine is not only beneficial for ourselves, but it also helps others, A little kindness or radiance of calmness can help just as much as volunteer work or other offerings. By offering help we can give meaning, purpose and a sense of control to our lives.

Potential positive effects

This crisis can help develop a sense of cooperation and altruism in our society. It can also contribute to scientific and technical progress e.g.: through the development of online learning/teaching. We can learn and evolve during this time, even by picking up new habits and activities which are outside our comfort zone.

Sources

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