

Coronavirus

Avoiding Fear, Rumors, False Information and Panic

COVID-19 is a new respiratory virus that has been detected in over 100 countries. Information is rapidly evolving but not complete, which can lead to fear, rumors, inaccurate information and possibly, panic. Knowing how to avoid these pitfalls can help people manage this difficult situation more effectively.

Know the Facts - Up to date and accurate information is critical to avoiding unnecessary fear, rumor and panic. Spreading information that is inaccurate or not evidenced based in fact can escalate fear. Get information from reliable sources: **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO) and State and local Public Health Organizations.** If you are a leader, provide the most accurate information promptly and completely. Encourage others to avoid over exposure to media.

Know the Disease - The following are symptoms of COVID-19 - fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus transmits - person to person, through respiratory droplets from the infected individual. It's also transmitted by coughing or sneezing and through touching surfaces or objects, then touching mouth, nose or eyes. Respect social distancing.

Be Prepared with a Family Plan - Find local organizations to contact for information, support and assistance. Learn your employer's plan for continuing operation during the pandemic. Have household supplies for at least two weeks to minimize going out. Plan for childcare if schools are closed. Plan how to arrange your home if you need to separate a sick family member. Figure out how you will care for a sick family member. Plan how you will care for pets if you become sick.

Behavioral Health During a Pandemic/Public Health Emergency

Behavioral health is important during a pandemic. Uncertainty can increase fear and lead to stigma towards others. Managing emotions will assist people with building resilience.

Common Reactions

- Fear and worry
- Increase or decrease in eating
- Poor sleep and concentration
- Worsening of chronic medical issues
- Increase use of alcohol and/or drugs

Ways to Support Yourself

- Avoid excessive exposure to media
- Take care of your body
- Make time to relax and unwind
- Connect with others
- Practice positivity and remain hopeful

Ways to Support Others

- Recognize those at risk of stigma
- Know the facts about the virus
- Share facts, not rumors
- Support those at risk of stigma
- Model appropriate coping skills

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. For the latest information visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

As always, your EAP is here for you and your family. Whether you are staying home or continuing your routine, there are a variety of ways to connect with your EAP including: by telephone 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7341, online at [EAP4YOU.com](https://www.eap4you.com), through video, by live chat or text message. Reach out to us to learn more about the many options you have to receive support from your Employee Assistance Program.