

Participant Guide

# Managing Emotions During Turbulent Times

Strategies to Manage Anxiety, Fear and Stress



## Overview

We are living in turbulent times in our country right now. World events such as the Covid-19 Pandemic, Economic Uncertainty and Social Unrest have created an unprecedented level of fear and anxiety in people.

This session will help you become more aware of your stress symptoms and emotional responses. You will learn positive strategies to manage stress and anxiety by implementing simple self-care practices such as relaxation techniques and focusing on the three pillars of health: diet, exercise, and sleep.

## **Seminar Agenda**

- ✓ Emotional impact of turbulent times
- ✓ Identifying fear and overcoming anxiety
- ✓ Defining stress signs and symptoms
- ✓ Healthy stress management strategies
- ✓ Focusing on your Locus of Control
- ✓ Self-care practices
- ✓ Relaxation techniques
- ✓ Helping yourself and loved ones
- ✓ Important resources

Seminar Length: 1 hour





## Current Environment

- COVID-19 Pandemic
- Social Unrest
- · Economic Uncertainty
- Weather Related Emergencies

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# **Emotional Responses**

Shock	Feeling Numb	
Confusion	Feeling Lost	
Anxiety	Feeling Anxious	
Fear	Feeling Scared	
Anger	er Feeling Outrage	
Denial	Feeling Helpless	
Depression	Feeling Overwhelmed	

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# Identify Your Pandemic Fear

- Creating a catastrophic future: Worst-Case Scenarios
- · Thinking about what might happen: The 'What-ifs'
- Identify your Worst-Case fears:
  - This pandemic will never end
  - Everyone will end up getting sick and lose their life
  - We'll all lose our jobs
  - I won't be able to pay the bills
  - My children will fall behind in school
  - The fires/hurricanes/heat are destroying everything
  - Social Unrest and the Political landscape is overwhelming

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## Overcoming Anxiety

- · Focus on facts Not fearful communication
- Minimize exposure to the news
- Remind yourself that supplies have been replenished
- · Practice physical distancing when out in public
- Follow state or city guidelines regarding masks
- · Take measures to safeguard your homes
- · Be proactive to manage your stress
- · Reach out for support, talk with family and friends
- Utilize your EAP, Concern and other healthcare resources

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"When stress become chronic, it turns into distress. It creates a hostile environment in your body."

Susan B Johnson, Ed.D.

Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research



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## **Defining Stress**

- · Normal psychological and physical reactions to the demands of life
- · Feeling overloaded or overwhelmed
- Body's natural defense against Danger. Flushes the body with hormones to prepare systems to evade or confront danger – The "fight or flight or freeze" mechanism
- · Stress can be mild to extreme depending on person and situation
- Stress is cumulative the more stress we experience, the more stressed we tend to feel
- · Stress is personal to the individual
- Adrenaline and Cortisol surge in body causing negative health consequences

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# Physical Signs of Stress

- · Clenching or grinding teeth
- Headaches
- Tight shoulders/neck
- Gastrointestinal difficulties
- Sleep troubles, disturbing dreams
- · Aches and pains
- · Elevated heart rate
- Sweating

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- Frequent colds or sickness
- Change in appetite
- · Heartburn or nausea
- Nervous habits, fidgeting, feet tapping
- Difficulty focusing or concentrating
- · Difficulty calming down
- · Low energy/exhaustion



## Steps to Manage Stress

#### Three Steps to take

- Awareness: Recognize signs of stress.
   PAY ATTENTION to your body, mind and spirit.
- Identify: What triggered your stress, Is it something you can control? Or is it out of your control?
- Action: What you're willing to do to alleviate your stress.
   What kind of help or action do you need?

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## Strategies to Manage Anxiety

- · Face your 'Worst Case Scenario' by having a Plan
- Look for 'Silver Linings': What good are you currently experiencing
- Turn Fear into H.O.P.E.- Having Only Positive Expectancy
- S.T.O.P. Stop, Take some Breaths, Observe Sensations, Pause, then Proceed
- Focus on what's in your control like your thoughts and actions

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## Outside of Your Control

- · Other people: spouse, children, boss, neighbors, and strangers
- · Other people's problems and behavior
- · Many of life's challenges and situations
- Weather
- · School closings & re-openings
- · Stores closings & re-openings
- · Financial markets
- Workplace rules and protocols

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#### Within Your Control

- · Effort and work ethic
- · Honesty and integrity
- Your attitude
- Mindset
- · What you say, do, and think
- · Offering and receiving help
- Implementing Stress Management and Self-Care Practices

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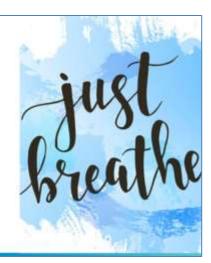




## Self-Care Strategies

- Acknowledge your situation
- Keep things in perceptive
- Set realistic expectations
- Focus on '3 Pillars of Health'
- Stress-Management Tips:
  - Take frequent breaks
  - Set boundaries and priorities.
  - Practice an 'Attitude of Gratitude'
  - Engage in fun activities or hobbies
  - Continue personal hygiene





## Relaxation Techniques

Harvard Medical School published a list of six relaxation techniques that can help reduce stress:

- Breath focus: Take long, slow, deep breaths and gently disengage your mind from distracting thoughts and sensations. Focus on the sensation of air going in and out of your nose.
- Body scan: Breath focus combined with progressive muscle relaxation. Focus on one part of the body at a time, releasing physical tension, Improves awareness of mind-body connection.
- Guided imagery: Conjure up soothing scenes, places or experiences to help you relax and focus.
- 4. Mindfulness Meditation: Sit comfortably, facusing on breathing and bring your attention to the present moment, without drifting into the past or future. This technique has become increasing popular in recent years. Research suggests it may be helpful for people with anxiety, depression and pain.
- Yoga, tai chi and qigong: Three ancient practices combine breathing with physical movement. Physical postures can distract from mental clutter.
- Repetitive prayer/mantra: Stently repeat a short prayer or phrase while practicing breath focus.

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#### Helping Loved Ones Cope

- · Talk openly and honestly
- · Acknowledge their concerns
- Give them reassurance
- Model good coping skills within yourself
- Moderate and monitor TV and social media
- Dispel rumors and inaccurate information
- Maintain normal schedules and routines within your home
- Encourage positive activities, games and play
- Give children some control (games, clothes, food)





## Resources

SAMSA: samhsa.gov

Kids Health:

kidshealth.org

CDC: cdc.gov

· WHO: who.int

NIMH: nimh.gov

NASP: nasponline.org





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#### Confidential Life Balance Solutions at No Cost To You

#### Counseling

Set # of free face-to-face, phone, video or chat sessions per issue per 12 months

- · Difficulty with relationships
- Emotional distress
- Job Stress
- Communication/conflict tissues
- Substance use
- Grief

#### Family Care

#### Resources for all stages of life: Farenting & Childcare

- Childcare resources & referrals
- Tutors, mentors, programs for children with special needs
- Teens, college and beyond
- New Baby Kit

#### Adult Care Needs

- . Medison-Wheels
- · Alzheimer's education
- · In-home, sub-acute, rehab care
- Free resource book

#### Legal & Financial

- Legal Referrols
- Immigration
- Family law
- Estate planning With & trust

#### Financial Consultations

- Money management
- Debt corsolidation
- Investment basics
- Income faxes

#### ID theft resolution

Legal Resource Center

employees.concernhealth.com

800-344-4222



Your employer cares about you as an employee and as a person who lives a life outside the workplace. We at Concern understand how balancing these roles can make your life a juggling act in:

- Balancing work, home and leisure
- Taking care of people who rely on you
- Dealing with the stress of modern life
- Handling loss and the unexpected





Accessible from your phone, tablet, or computer, Luma is your digital front door to everything Concern has to offer.

Luma combines technology, counseling, and self-help tools with compassionate human interaction—all in one place.



Your health and wellbeing are our top priority.

For guidelines and safe practices in the workplace and at home during the COVID19 pandemic, go to:

https://employees.concernhealth.com/coronavirus-resources





## Seminar Evaluation Form: Concern Health Please fill out and return to presenter or HR Representative. Your feedback is very important to us. Seminar Title: Managing Emotions During Turbulent Times Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_ Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_ Very Regarding the Seminar **Excellent** Good Fair Poor Good 1. How well were the seminar objectives 2. Usefulness of seminar information? 3. Length of seminar? 4. Effectiveness of exercises? 5. How would you rate this seminar overall? Very Regarding the Presenter **Excellent** Good Fair Poor Good 1. Presentation skills? 2. Ability to answer questions? 3. Knowledge of subject? 4. Use of time? 5. Overall assessment of presenter? **Additional Comments** 1. What would you recommend that could help make this seminar more effective? 2. What part of the seminar did you find most helpful?

Thank You for Your Feedback!

3. Additional comments/suggestions for speaker's improvement?

