Pandemics, like COVID-19, challenge the way people cope. During a pandemic it’s not uncommon to experience strong emotions. Psychology helps us to understand normal responses to abnormal events – this can help Albertans cope. Novel & unfamiliar threats provoke anxiety & even unrealistic fears & racism. Social distancing, effective communication, & public health measures are realistic lines of defense.

**Stay Informed – Not Overloaded.** With major news events, media inundates us with coverage & potential implications – that can create additional stress. Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Framing risk with clear facts helps quell panic.

**Stay healthy** -- A healthy lifestyle is your best defense against disease. Physical health has positive impacts on psychological health (and vice versa). Social distancing & good personal hygiene will keep you, & others, safe.

**Manage your own Stress**
- **Limit your media consumption** to just enough to stay informed. Take some time for yourself, go for a walk, or spend time with friends & family doing things that you enjoy.
- **Avoid getting into discussions about the event** if you think they have the potential to escalate to conflict. Be cognizant of the frequency with which you’re discussing the news.
• **Stress & anxiety about the future is not productive.** Instead, work on issues you care about.

• **Remember that life will go on.** People have always survived difficult life circumstances. There is no reason why this situation cannot be similar. Avoid catastrophizing & maintain a balanced perspective.

• **Build your resilience – we can learn to** adapt well to stress – how have your coped with stressors before? Add resilience tools to your tool bag to manage life’s adversities.

• **Keep connected.** Maintain your social networks (even via social media & telephone).

• **Keep things in perspective --** Our government needs to prepare for possible worst-case scenarios in order to protect the public. The public, however, does not need to expect the worst.

• **Have a plan --** How would you respond if you or a loved once were diagnosed with COVID-19? Developing contingency plans for potential scenarios can lessen your anxiety.

**When to seek professional help**
Psychologists are trained to help people find constructive ways of dealing with anxiety & emotional stress. Contact a psychologist if:

• You feel overwhelming nervousness or lingering sadness adversely affecting you
• You notice persistent feelings of distress or hopelessness & you feel like you are barely able to get through your daily responsibilities & activities
• You are engaging in any behavior that induces guilt, regret and/or helplessness.

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**Find a New Jersey Psychologist**

**Find Helpful Psychological Public Resources**

**Read our Public E-Newsletters**

[www.psychologynj.org](http://www.psychologynj.org)

*The mission of the New Jersey Psychological Association is the advancement of psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health and human welfare in an atmosphere that supports the diversity of its members and the society at large.*