

# Self-Care Tips

**Self-care means taking time to do things you enjoy.** Usually, self-care involves everyday activities that you find relaxing, fun, or energizing. These activities could be as simple as reading a book, or as big as taking a vacation.

**Self-care also means taking care of yourself.** This means eating regular meals, getting enough sleep, caring for personal hygiene, and anything else that maintains good health.

**Make self-care a priority.** There will always be other things to do, but don't let these interrupt the time you set aside for self-care. Self-care should be given the same importance as other responsibilities.

**Set specific self-care goals.** It's difficult to follow through with vague goals, such as "I will take more time for self-care". Instead, try something specific, such as "I will walk for 30 minutes every evening after dinner".

**Make self-care a habit.** Just like eating one apple doesn't eliminate health problems, using self-care just once won't have much effect on reducing stress. Choose activities that you can do often, and that you will stick with.

**Set boundaries to protect your self-care.** You don't need a major obligation to say "no" to others—your self-care is reason enough. Remind yourself that your needs are as important as anyone else's.

**A few minutes of self-care is better than no self-care.** Set an alarm reminding you to take regular breaks, even if it's just a walk around the block, or an uninterrupted snack. Oftentimes, stepping away will energize you to work more efficiently when you return.

**Unhealthy activities don't count as self-care.** Substance use, over-eating, and other unhealthy behaviors might hide uncomfortable emotions temporarily, but they cause more problems in the long run.

**Keep up with self-care, even when you're feeling good.** Doing so will keep you in a healthy routine. Plus, self-care might be part of the reason *why* you're feeling good!

# Coping Skills

## Anxiety

### Deep Breathing

Deep breathing is a simple technique that's excellent for managing emotions. Not only is deep breathing effective, it's also discreet and easy to use at any time or place.

Sit comfortably and place one hand on your abdomen. Breathe in through your nose, deeply enough that the hand on your abdomen rises. Hold the air in your lungs, and then exhale slowly through your mouth, with your lips puckered as if you are blowing through a straw. The secret is to go slow: Time the inhalation (4s), pause (4s), and exhalation (6s). Practice for 3 to 5 minutes.



### Progressive Muscle Relaxation

By tensing and relaxing the muscles throughout your body, you can achieve a powerful feeling of relaxation. Additionally, progressive muscle relaxation will help you spot anxiety by teaching you to recognize feelings of muscle tension.

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. For each area of the body listed below, you will tense your muscles tightly, but not to the point of strain. Hold the tension for 10 seconds, and pay close attention to how it feels. Then, release the tension, and notice how the feeling of relaxation differs from the feeling of tension.

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|------------------|--|
| <b>Feet</b>      | Curl your toes tightly into your feet, then release them.                    |
| <b>Calves</b>    | Point or flex your feet, then let them relax.                                |
| <b>Thighs</b>    | Squeeze your thighs together tightly, then let them relax.                   |
| <b>Torso</b>     | Suck in your abdomen, then release the tension and let it fall.              |
| <b>Back</b>      | Squeeze your shoulder blades together, then release them.                    |
| <b>Shoulders</b> | Lift and squeeze your shoulders toward your ears, then let them drop.        |
| <b>Arms</b>      | Make fists and squeeze them toward your shoulders, then let them drop.       |
| <b>Hands</b>     | Make a fist by curling your fingers into your palm, then relax your fingers. |
| <b>Face</b>      | Scrunch your facial features to the center of your face, then relax.         |
| <b>Full Body</b> | Squeeze all muscles together, then release all tension.                      |

# Coping Skills

## Anxiety

### Challenging Irrational Thoughts

Anxiety can be magnified by irrational thoughts. For example, the thoughts that “something bad will happen” or “I will make a mistake” might lack evidence, but still have an impact on how you feel. By examining the evidence and challenging these thoughts, you can reduce anxiety.

**Put thoughts on trial.** Choose a thought that has contributed to your anxiety. Gather evidence in support of your thought (*verifiable facts only*), and against your thought. Compare the evidence and determine whether your thought is accurate or not.

**Use Socratic questioning.** Question the thoughts that contribute to your anxiety. Ask yourself:

“Is my thought based on facts or feelings?”

“How would my best friend see this situation?”

“How likely is it that my fear will come true?”

“What’s *most likely* to happen?”

“If my fear comes true, will it still matter in a week? A month? A year?”

### Imagery

Your thoughts have the power to change how you feel. If you think of something sad, it’s likely you’ll start to feel sad. The opposite is also true: When you think of something positive and calming, you feel relaxed. The imagery technique harnesses this power to reduce anxiety.

Think of a place that you find comforting. It could be a secluded beach, your bedroom, a quiet mountaintop, or even a loud concert. For 5 to 10 minutes, use all your senses to imagine this setting in great detail. Don’t just think fleetingly about this place—really imagine it.



What do you see around you? What do you notice in the distance? Look all around to take in all your surroundings. Look for small details you would usually miss.



What sounds can you hear? Are they soft or loud? Listen closely to everything around you. Keep listening to see if you notice any distant sounds.



Are you eating or drinking something enjoyable? What is the flavor like? How does it taste? Savor all the tastes of the food or drink.



What can you feel? What is the temperature like? Think of how the air feels on your skin, and how your clothes feel on your body. Soak in all these sensations.



What scents are present? Are they strong or faint? What does the air smell like? Take some time to appreciate the scents.

**CCCBA  
EAST COUNTY SECTION Brown Bag Lunch: Coping with Stress During COVID-19  
(Zoom Meeting) Thursday, May 07, 12:00PM - 1:30PM**

**Speaker**

Kellee Cathey - MA, LMFT

**PRESENTATION Overview**

Anxiety -worry, fear, restlessness, difficulty concentrating

Stress - feeling of emotional or physical tension, demands being placed on you

What has been created from COVID-19- Isolation, Fear, anxiety, and worry and Stress

When you believe something bad will happen and doubt your ability to cope, you will feel anxious.

Anxiety is normal and will come based on our perception, but you CAN CONTROL how you respond to that feeling.

**Put your Thoughts on Trial-** What is the evidence to support that thought? Evidence for and against?

**Reframe-** Catching negative thoughts and changing them is called Reframe- "I am going to sick and something terrible is going to happen"

Reframe- "I am healthy now; everything is as good as it can be and I plan to remain healthy by continuing to follow the protocols set forth by the health officials."

Negative Thought "I am not going to be able to cope too much longer without having a nervous breakdown."

Reframe "I have been able to survive and make it through other difficulties in the past, I have supports in place now like family and coping skills (walking), my personal strength will carry me through.

Having a hard time with re-frames, then think of what you would say to a loved one, your child, etc. to figure out what to say.

Practical Tips/ Exercises

**Anxiety and Stress-** Deep Breathing with the Magical #3- Inhale for 3, Hold for 3, Exhale for 3- repeat 3 times

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation-** tense and release muscles

Mindfulness in a Safe and Relaxed Place- Take a walk and do this, step outside, or look out a window. What do you see, hear (cars, birds, kids), smell (pollen, food), feel (sun, wind, cold)? **Helps reduce Fear and Anxiety**

What are the Positives of this Situation: More time to Rest, More time to spend with Family.

Grateful- what do you have to be grateful for everyday

Value of Positive Statements:

Positive Statements: "I am doing a great job at home-schooling my children and working from home, and I am amazed at how well I have been able to adapt in this crisis."

"I am managing my life and all the different parts of it, as best as I can during these circumstances."

## **Tips**

Ways to Manage:

Decrease caffeine- caffeine heightens anxiety

Sleep- go to sleep and wake-up the same time every day and create a schedule for yourself and the family

Schedule for the family- Wake Up, Homework/Work Time, Break- Connect with Family, Work/School Work, Lunch with Family, etc. Create a Structure that allows you to be productive and the children to be productive as well.

Limit the Television or source of news to no more than 1-2 hours per day -Decrease Anxiety

Take walks, exercise daily for at least 30-45 minutes if at all possible- Decrease Stress and Isolation

Be Mindful-What do you see, smell, hear, touch or even taste- keeps us in the here and now and away from what ifs and what could happen, it's all about what's happening now.

Make time to connect with family and friends- have a family check-in via Zoom once a week for all of those that are not in your immediate household. - Decrease Isolation

Send cards, letters, packages in the mail to connect with friends, family and loved ones

For Moms: you may feel overwhelmed- plan a task list of 1-3 items that consist of household things that you either want to accomplish in that day or in that week. When you are finished, check it off and create your next one-anything that can give you a sense of accomplishment is going to feel great as a Mother. Don't be hard on yourself and use positive statements to cope with difficult parenting challenges- "I am doing great, given the situation, and I am proud of all of the roles which I execute daily. I am amazing."

Self-Care- do things that you love and enjoy as much as possible- favorite show, paint your nails, read your favorite book.

Do something that can give you a sense of accomplishment, clean out a room or a drawer in your kitchen.

I have included resources for children and family:

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/coronavirus-anxiety.htm>

Children's Book on COVID-19

[https://www.millieandsuzie.com/?fbclid=IwAR3rRXBjkWlnRdDUkOt0A\\_ZhXkOBUmbwP2BaodPBInBCu7uxluU2rw3GO7s.htm](https://www.millieandsuzie.com/?fbclid=IwAR3rRXBjkWlnRdDUkOt0A_ZhXkOBUmbwP2BaodPBInBCu7uxluU2rw3GO7s.htm)

Children's Story for Corona Virus

[https://www.anagomez.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm\\_uploads/2020/04/OysterandButterfly-EnglishV3.pdf](https://www.anagomez.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2020/04/OysterandButterfly-EnglishV3.pdf)