

Coping through Covid: Building on Your Resilience

Dr Margie Oakander MD FRCPC
March 30, 2020



Are you feeling a bit like this?



May I suggest some ways to build upon your wisdom and resiliency (and that of your patients as well!)



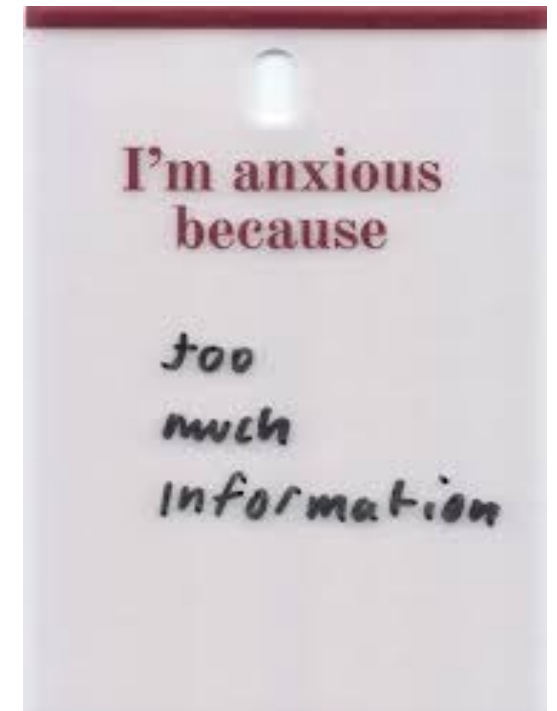
Fight Fear with Facts



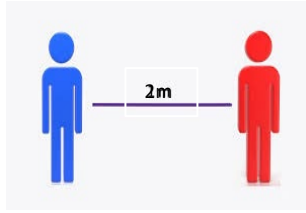
- Get your information from trusted sources –
- ahs.ca/covidphc *
- Daily update with Dr Deena Hinshaw (Chief Medical Officer of Alberta on CBC radio)
- Keep perspective on risks

Information not Inundation

- Limit exposure to news and constant social media
- Take media breaks



* The source of all Truth COVID related in AB!



Physical not Social Distancing

- Stay socially connected
- Plan phone/Skype visits with friends and family
- Online book clubs, exercise groups – many possibilities and people are creative!

Maintain a Routine

- Sleep/wake schedule – sleep hygiene
- Mealtimes and healthy eating
- Building in exercise/social time



Exercise



- Part of the routine for physical and mental health
- Lots of ideas on how to exercise at home
- Yogavidya on you tube is my fave yoga class

Get Outside if you can



- Benefits of fresh air and sunshine
- Getting out in nature connects you to the earth and is calming

“Collective Grief is in the Air”

(David Kessler Grief expert and co-author on Grief with E. Kubler-Ross)

- The world has changed
- Loss of normalcy
- Fear of economic toll
- Loss of connection
- Cancelling of plans
- Fear of physical danger
- It's OK to feel sadness, fear , anger



Talk to friends, family, coworkers about your feelings

- Take some time to feel the sadness...
- Based on That Discomfort You're Feeling is Grief by Scott Berinato
- Harvard Business Review March 23, 2020

Stages of Grief

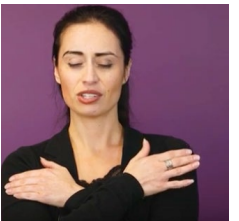
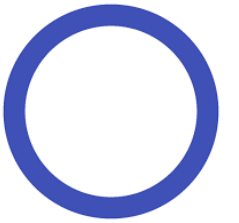
- **Denial:** “This virus won’t affect us...”
- **Anger:** “You're making me stay home and taking away my activities” “Between COVID and the government – I’m feeling attacked.”
- **Bargaining:** “Ok If I social distance for two weeks everything will be better, right?”
- **Sadness:** “I don’t know when this will end.” “I’ll go bankrupt”
- **Acceptance:** “This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed” **Acceptance** is where the power lies. We can find control in acceptance. “I can wash my hands, keep a safe distance, learn how to work virtually?” “Patients will come to the office and need care when this is all over – I can make it work”
- **Meaning:** Finding meaning and light in the darkest hours (e.g. appreciation of personal connection, walks in nature, satisfaction in helping patients, conversations by phone to friends and loved ones...)

Anticipatory grief - going to the future and imagining the worst

- **Combat negative thinking:** Find balance in the things you're thinking, balance negative thoughts with positive ones, remembering that there are wonderful things in this world
- **Online CBT tools:**  
- **Develop positive mantra:** We will get through this. The brightest minds are working to solve these problems. There are great acts of compassion in the world...
- **Stock up on compassion:** People are stressed. Let's be patient and cut them some slack...

More anxiety management strategies from Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Trauma Informed Psychology

- **Progressive muscle relaxation: Mindshift app**
- **Paced breathing:** Inhale through your nose and loooooong exhale through pursed lips (lowers heart rate and activates parasympathetic ns)
- **Breathe Easy: Paced breathing app**
- **Grounding:** Name 5 things in the room, and breathe, focus on your senses
- **Butterfly hug** with alternate tapping and positive affirmations – a technique developed for survivors of natural disasters. Lots of videos on how to do this on YouTube (e.g. TYF support group video)



Artigas, L., Jarero, I., Mauer, M., López Cano, T., & Alcalá, N. (2000, September). EMDR and Traumatic Stress after Natural Disasters: Integrative Treatment Protocol and the Butterfly Hug. Poster presented at the EMDRIA Conference, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness: Coming into the present and being aware of sensations and breathing

Websites:

- Tara Bruch: <https://www.tarabrach.com/pandemic/>
- www.Palousemindfulness.com (free out of University of Massachusetts Medical School) very detailed 8-week program

And the Calgary connection with:

- www.TheBreathProject.org (Dr Phil Blustein)
- www.Wellnessthroughmindfulness.com (Dr Allan Donsky et al)

Click here to go back to

The Breath Project 

Wellness Through Mindfulness - Calgary

A Breath Project Site

Positive Psychology Exercises

- Noticing kindness
 - Doing kind things
 - Savoring small moments
 - Reliving positive experience
 - Noticing good things that are happening
 - Amplify positive stories and messages
-
- Mass General Center for Addiction Medicine
<https://scholar.harvard.edu/bettina.hoeppner/sis>



Taking space between work and home

Consciously clearing the impact after a day at work

- Remind yourself you're leaving work behind using **rituals**

For example:

- Looking in the rearview mirror as you drive away
- Doing some breathing exercises before getting in the door at home
- Rituals for when you get home: Standing outside breathing, grounding to the earth, showering, exercising, music
- So you can connect with your family, partner, friends, and yourself



Tips for health care workers/emergency responders

- 1. Recognizing signs of burnout including sadness or apathy, frustration, irritability, isolation/disconnection, feeling exhausted or overwhelmed, substance use;
- 2. Creating a “buddy system” to check in with a colleague and monitor each other’s workload and self-care;
- 3. Engaging in self-care strategies like confiding in others, deep breathing, sleep and healthy eating, setting boundaries where possible;
- 4. Reminding yourself it is not selfish to take breaks, and working all the time does not mean you will make your best contribution

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp>



Physician and Family Support Program

CALL

1.877.SOS.4MDS (767.4637)

International: 403.930.0529 (you may call collect)

CONFIDENTIAL 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year

The Physician and Family Support Program provides confidential support and help with personal health issues and enhances the quality of patient care and public safety by promoting health and well-being for the medical profession that cares for all Albertans. [Download our program info-sheets.](#)



I need help now

Physicians, residents and medical students need to be able to voluntarily seek help with the assurance of confidentiality. Working with PFSP is one way to ensure that difficulties can be identified and mitigated before a crisis or concern about patient safety arises.



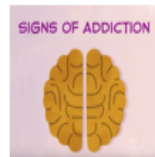
Physician Health Resources

Visit the links below to access personal and workplace health information for all stages of your career, sorted by subject.



PFSP Services

New to the Physician and Family Support Program? Want to know more about the process or what to expect when calling in? Watch our series of short informative videos.



Substance use disorder

What is substance use disorder (SUD) and how can the Alberta Medical Association's Physician and Family Support Program help Alberta physicians? PFSP and the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta have partnered with Dr. Teresa Eliasson to create a video to educate physicians about SUD: what it is, how to identify it and where to seek help.

Member services

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Request a physician health presentation

How do I request a [physician health presentation](#)?

- Complete the [Education Request Form](#)
- Email the form to PFSP@albertadoctors.org or fax it to 403.245.2899.
- Once we receive your form, we'll work with you to meet your needs.

Alberta Health Services website





Canadian Mental
Health Association
Calgary
Mental health for all

Calgary resources

We're Available for Support

Despite our main office closure during the **COVID-19** pandemic, **peer support and counselling services are still available** and can be reached by phone or email.

Suicide Bereavement & Family Support Counselling

P: 403-297-1708

E: counsellingintake@cmha.calgary.ab.ca

Peer Support

P: 403-297-1402

E: peer@cmha.calgary.ab.ca



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Calgary
Mental health for all

Or visit www.cmha.calgary.ab.ca for more information

Eastside Family Centre



CALL: 403-299-9699



TEXT: 403-315-5000



etherapy@woodshomes.ca



LiveChat: woodshomes.ca

A vibrant rainbow arches across a sky filled with soft, wispy clouds. Below the rainbow, a bright sun is partially obscured by dark, silhouetted clouds, creating a dramatic sunset or sunrise scene. The colors transition from deep blues and purples at the top to warm oranges and yellows near the horizon.

HOPE

Is being able to see the light despite all the darkness.

~Desmond Tutu~