



COVID-19 Self-Care Packet

Tips on how to manage stress and practice self-care while navigating
Coronavirus concerns

Texas A&M International University
Student Counseling and Disability Services for Students
STC 128 956-326-2230

With the current changes, everyone is feeling stress, anxiety, or a mix of different emotions. We have created this package to help you take a break from the stress and ask yourself, **“What can I do for myself right now to make myself feel a little better?”** and then do something to help yourself feel a little more in control.

We are not in control of the pandemic but we can control how we respond. This packet provides information, coping skills, and resources. Review it and find what works for you.

What is stress?

A normal physical response to events that make you feel threatened or upset your balance in some way.

Symptoms:

Anxious or worrying thoughts
Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)
Seeing only the negative
Inability to concentrate
Moodiness
Irritability or short temper
Feeling overwhelmed/burnt out
Sense of loneliness/isolation or general unhappiness
Chest pain, rapid heartbeat

TAO modules:
Calming Your Anxiety
TAO mindfulness library

Tips:

- Avoid unnecessary stress
- Alter the situation
- Adapt to the stressor
- Accept the things you can not change
- Adopt a healthy lifestyle
- Getting a good night's sleep; do not take daytime naps
- Make time for fun and relaxation
- Take time to connect with yourself and others
- Doing something by yourself once a day that you find relaxing
- Find support.

Psychological Tips for Managing Coronavirus Concerns

Recognizing Distress-A Self-Check List

- Increased anxiety, worry, fear, and feelings of being overwhelmed
- Depressive symptoms that persist and/or intensify
- Inability to focus or concentrate accompanied by decreased academic performance
- A feeling of hopelessness and/or a paralyzing fear about the future
- Sudden anger and disruptive behaviors or noticeable changes in personality
- Sleep difficulties
- Excessive crying
- Isolating or withdrawing from others, fear of going into public situations
- Unhealthy coping (e.g., increased alcohol or drug use, engaging in risky/impulsive behaviors)

Continues in next page

Psychological Tips for Managing Coronavirus Concerns (continued)

Psychological Health Tips

- **Acknowledge reactions.** Allow yourself time to reflect on what you are feeling and how you may be reacting to any fears and uncertainties of the future.
- **Maintain your day-to-day normal activities and social outlets.** Resist withdrawing and isolating yourself from the support and caring that others can provide. Use technology, if needed, to connect with others.
- **Seek accurate information from “The Center for Disease Control & Prevention” and limit exposure to social media and news reports that provide no new information.**
- **Pay attention to positive news instead of only focusing on negative and fear-producing reports.**
- **Follow the protection and prevention tips given by medical professionals such as national medical authorities and your own medical doctor.**
- **Practice calming rituals:** Stay grounded in the present moment, which can help you maintain an internal sense of stability and balance when outside events feel threatening.
- **Seek support and use campus resources.** Reach out to friends and family. Learn about campus resources available. If you or someone you know has high distress that does not seem to be lessening, talk about it with others. Your campus community is here to help.

Avoid Stigmatizing or Generalizing

- **Be aware of your behavior or attitude change towards others from another country.**
- **Avoid generalizing anyone who is sick as potentially having the Coronavirus.**
- **Examine any irrational or rigid thoughts that can exist when there is uncertainty.**

Dealing with your thoughts and assumptions

Self-statements/Cognitive Coping:

What can you say to yourself to help you feel better?

Examples include, "I'm safe now; he's not here; It's not my fault. I can get through this."

You already survived your past.

Use your skills to identify the thoughts bothering you and see if you can identify an alternative true way to think about what is happening.

Redirect Unhelpful Thoughts:

Notice if you have a lot of self-critical or otherwise discouraging thoughts. Push these away and identify something positive you can do.

What would your mentor say?

Whom do you admire? What do you imagine they would say to encourage you?

Reality Check:

Is there something I need to do about this right now?

Is there something I could do about this right now?

Is there another way to think about this?

Radical Acceptance

Lifeline-is there someone else I can talk to about my options

TAO modules:
Calming your Anxiety
Let Go and Be Well
TAO mindfulness library

Self Soothing Coping Skills

Self-soothing is a tool we can use to soothe and calm ourselves when we're anxious or distressed.

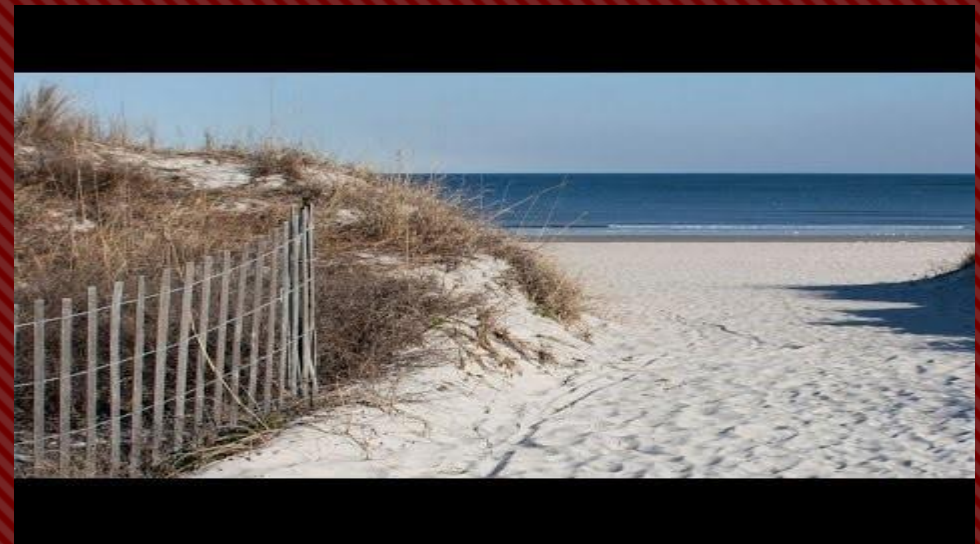
Coping Skills: Breathing

Typically, an anxious person takes small, shallow breaths, using their shoulders rather than their diaphragm to move air in and out of their lungs. Shallow over-breathing, or hyperventilation, can prolong feelings of anxiety by making the physical symptoms of stress worse. Controlling your breathing can help to improve some of these symptoms.

Controlled breathing can cause physiological changes that include:

lowered blood pressure and heart rate

- reduced levels of stress hormones in the blood
- reduced lactic acid build-up in muscle tissue
- balanced levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood
- improved immune system functioning
- increased physical energy
- increased feelings of calm and wellbeing.



Deep breathing exercise:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYQsRBNYdPk>

Coping Skills: Exercise

Change your focus and get your body moving.

Scientists have found that regular participation in aerobic **exercise** has been shown to decrease overall levels **of** tension, elevate and stabilize mood, improve sleep, and improve self-esteem. Even five minutes **of** aerobic **exercise** can stimulate anti-anxiety effects.



Coping Skills: Music

Use a relaxing or lively tune or music that inspires you. Consider dancing.

Classical music can be beneficial for your body as well: studies have shown that it helps slow your heart rate, ease stress, and lower blood pressure.



Coping Skills: Relax your body

Progressive muscle relaxation. Download guided relaxation. Take a bath or shower. Do yoga.



Coping Skills: Comfort Item

Hold onto or wrap yourself in something comforting – a blanket, jacket, scarf, stuffed animal – anything that helps you feel more comfortable.



Coping Skills: Imagery

Look at and direct your attention towards a picture or photograph of a beautiful and calming scene (i.e., beach, mountains).



Coping Skills: Visualization

Visualize a place you love, either that you have been at, or that you enjoy imagining yourself to be there. Describe it paying attention to using all five senses (e.g., the beach: what it looks like, how the sand feels, what it sounds like: wind and waves, salt water smell).



Coping Skills: Brief Vacation

Turn off phones or other devices. Unplug and relax momentarily to recharge yourself – emotionally and physically. Take a nap. Stretch. Go outside and breathe some fresh air.



Coping Skills: Be Kind to Yourself

Validate yourself: “This is hard, and I’m doing the best I can” or
“This won’t last forever. I will get through this.”



Wellness Resource Mobile Apps

Providing mobile and convenient mental health resources for individual assistance.

TAO

Complete the wellness survey to get access to all modules

TAO Connect is a self-guided tool, consisting of educational and interactive modules, practice tools, journals and progress measures. It allows you to move through the courses at your own pace, when you're feeling down and need encouragement, or visiting our mindfulness library when you need a moment to meditate.



Sign up and get instant anonymous access to powerful evidence based programs, content and tools to help you feel better.

ThePath.TAOConnect.org

Let Go and Be Well

- Introduction to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- Fusion and Defusion
- Thinking Mind vs. Observing Mind and Acceptance
- Mindfulness
- Values
- Taking Action

Calming your Anxiety

- Relaxation and Anxiety Reduction
- Thoughts, Assumptions, and Core Beliefs
- Mindfulness
- Facing your Fears
- Lifestyle Factors

Interpersonal Relationships and Communication

- Managing Anger
- Communication Strategies
- Relationships
- Communication Styles
- Problem Solving

Leave your Blues Behind

- Feelings and Thoughts
- Understanding Stress and Relaxation
- Unhealthy and Healthy Thoughts
- Layers of Thinking
- Core Beliefs
- Relationships, Lifestyle, and Problem Solving

Improving Your Mood

- Behavioral Activation
- Make and Activation Plan and Identifying Values
- Achieving Flow and Identifying Strengths
- Avoidance and Depression Traps
- Problem Solving

Pain Management

- Understanding Pain
- Managing Pain and Lifestyle Factors
- Cognitive Strategies for Pain Management
- Mediation for Pain
- Act for Pain Management

Evaluating My Alcohol and Drug Use

- Do I Need to Do Something About My Alcohol or Drug Use?
- Making Decisions about your Alcohol or Drug Use

Recovery Skills and Topics

- Coping with Cravings
- Refusal Skills and Social Support in Recovery
- Recovering from a Lapse or Relapse
- Overcoming Guilt and Shame
- Managing Finances in Recovery
- Time Management in Recovery
- Identifying Core Values in Recovery

Easy Sign Up at:

ThePath.TAOconnect.org

or use the QR code below.

1. Enter your basic info, use your university email address.
2. Leave the 'Enrollment Key' field blank.
3. Fill out the demographics and read the Informed Consent form, click 'Sign Me Up!'
4. Check your email. You will be sent a confirmation link which you must click on to confirm your account.



<https://thepath.taoconnect.org/local/login/index.php>

MY3

STAY CONNECTED
TO YOUR SUPPORT
NETWORK.



Suicide Prevention App

DOWNLOAD



Available on the
App Store

Get it on
Google play

- With MY3, you define your network and your plan to stay safe. With MY3 you can be prepared to help yourself and reach out to others when you are having thoughts of suicide.
- Remember: there is hope and a life to look forward to, even in your darkest moments. MY3 can help you get through your most difficult times.
- Who are your 3? Is it your sister? Your therapist? Maybe even a neighbor down the street? Download MY3 to make sure that your 3 are there to help you when you need them most.
- MY3 is available in the [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play](#), free of charge.

MY3 LETS YOU STAY CONNECTED WHEN YOU ARE HAVING THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE

MindShift



Is anxiety getting in the way of your life? MindShift uses scientifically proven strategies based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to help you learn to relax and be mindful, develop more effective ways of thinking, and use active steps to take charge of your anxiety.

Get the tools to tackle:

- Worry
- Panic
- Perfectionism
- Social Anxiety
- Phobias

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bstro.MindShift&hl=en_US

Mindfulness for your everyday life

Explore guided exercises, videos, and more to help you get healthier and happier.

<https://www.headspace.com/>



Can't Sleep: Download CBT-i Coach



CBT-i Coach is a mobile app for people who have experienced symptoms of insomnia and would like to improve their sleep habits. Features include: learning about sleep, developing positive routines, and improving their sleep environments. It provides a structured program that teaches strategies proven to improve sleep and help alleviate symptoms of insomnia.

Crisis Hotlines

Questions about Coronavirus?
Call the City of Laredo
Health Department



**24/7 CORONAVIRUS
HOTLINE**
956-795-4954

**NATIONAL
SUICIDE PREVENTION
LIFELINE**
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

PILLAR

(956) 723-7457 [24/7]

If you or someone you know is feeling Sad—Afraid—
Scared—Out of Control—Concerned about something—
Hurt—Annoyed—Ashamed—Embarrassed—Hopeless—Guilt—
yourself—Withdrawn—Helpless—Unhappy—Empty—or just need to talk to someone.
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CRISIS TEXT LINE |

**Text HOME
to 741 741**

**Veterans
Crisis Line**



1-800-273-8255
PRESS 1

The Trevor Project
SAVING YOUNG LIVES

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT PLEASE CALL THE TREVOR LIFELINE AT:

866 4-U-TREVOR
(866-488-7386)



BORDER REGION
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER
Gateway to a brighter tomorrow

24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 1-800-643-1102

You are not alone.



**TRANS
LIFELINE**
(877) 565-8860



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Dusty's Food Pantry is willing to provide a temporary supplemental supply of non-perishable goods to students who submit the required online form.

Students that wish to use of the food pantry, will be required to submit one online form per semester. Dusty's Food Pantry is committed to the confidentiality of each of our students that may be facing food insecurity. The following form is solely to keep accurate data collection of the demographics of our students as well as the performance of the food pantry. The information provided will be kept confidential and used only for statistics in our annual report.

[Food Pantry Form](#)

****ALL STUDENTS MUST SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT BEFORE ENTERING THE OFFICE* (956) 326-2265***

Sources

- Adapted from Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Counseling and Wellness Services
- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/breathing-to-reduce-stress>
- www.adaa.org
- www.psychcentral.com
- <https://thepath.taoconnect.org/local/login/index.php>
- <https://www.rtor.org/2020/03/23/emotional-survival-guide-for-covid-19/>
- www.tamtu.edu