

COPING AND CARING THROUGH CORONAVIRUS SCARE

10 TIPS TO MANAGE YOUR WELL-BEING



TIM ROGERS
Column

Are you looking for some practical ways to make living life under COVID-19 a bit more bearable? The pandemic is changing our daily lives in ways we've never experienced and impacting stress levels, fear, worry and anxiety.

It's normal to experience these symptoms when discussion of the virus is everywhere you turn, especially if you are supporting others around you who may also be struggling. The pointers below offer some simple — yet effective — ways to manage your emotional well-being if you feel affected by the novel coronavirus outbreak, are self-isolating or social distancing.

1. Do keep connected with others using technology: Plan phone calls or Skype with friends and family and utilize social media to stay connected with people while you self-isolate;

2. Keep up with self-care: Include things like long baths, showers or skin treatments within your daily routine;

3. Keep a schedule: This should be full of routine, pleasurable and necessary activities that you can do within your home. This may include activities like cooking, exercise or getting around to doing tasks you may have been putting off previously;

4. Add variety to your day: Try to strike a balance between having a solid routine and a varied day so that every day doesn't feel the same. Adding variety boosts our mood and motivation levels;

5. If possible, get some fresh air: Fresh air and natural light are both helpful for our well-being;

6. Try to remain active: Remember that exercise is beneficial for your physical and mental health. You may need to think creatively about how you exercise if you are not used to exercis-

ing at home, for example: taking online classes or working out using exercise DVDs;

7. Download a relaxation app and practice relaxation: Think of this as taking your mind to the gym. Just 10 minutes of relaxation per day is proven to reduce stress and improve your well-being;

8. It's OK to feel some anxiety: Understand that it is perfectly normal to feel some stress and anxiety, and you are not the only one experiencing these emotions whilst self-isolating;

9. Set yourself small goals: Think of this as an unusual period to do something you wouldn't usually have the time to do. This could be learning a new skill, hobby or getting that job done that you have been putting off for a while;

10. Take breaks from things you find triggering: Set limits with how much you engage with anxiety-provoking WhatsApp groups and social media channels, if they are causing you distress.

Try to stick to reliable news sources for your COVID-19 updates within your local area.

Using online support tools is also a great way to stay connected with a community of people who are going through a similar experience.

Every resident in Ontario can access Big White Wall (bigwhite-wall.com) for FREE — you'll have access to a 24/7, safe online community with clinicians on-hand for extra support. The service also provides self-guided courses, creative tools and resources. Register today using your Ontario postal code at www.bigwhite-wall.com.

Dr. Tim Rogers is a psychiatrist and the clinical director of Big White Wall, a free online mental health support service available to Ontarians dealing with anxiety, depression and other common mental health issues. Funded by the Province of Ontario and the Ontario Telemedicine Network, it's an online community that offers anonymous, free, peer-to-peer support in a safe and welcoming environment while being moderated 24/7 by clinical professionals.

WORKING WITH FRONT LINE AGENCIES



DANIELE ZANOTTI
Column

These are challenging and uncertain times. But the research is clear and consistent. Community matters. Especially in times of crisis, the stronger the sense of connection — local people working together — the more resilient the community.

And we are resilient.

We are a community that cares about each other.

We at United Way see it every year. Call it an uprising of care. People like you showing local love. Donating, volunteering all so the place where you live and work is great — for all.

COVID-19 is putting our community's most vulnerable people in an extremely challenging situation. Those who already face significant barriers, including poverty, homelessness and social isolation, need even more of our help during this time.

This crisis may last weeks or months. And we need our social infrastructure — that invisible network of agencies people visit, call and rely on every day in your neighbourhood — to be in place now and in the future.

As the largest investor in social services next to government, we're working closely with United Way's front-line agencies to identify the gaps, needs, trends and opportunities that may be emerging locally.

We're helping them navigate change, and offering them flexible funding so they can do what they do best: meet urgent needs for people.

These front-line United Way community agencies are working in new ways to ensure that those who are most vulnerable in our communities have access to the critical supports they need, close to home.

Across the GTA, we're work-

ing with the City of Toronto, Peel Region and York Region to continue connecting our network of over 270 agencies to deliver emergency response plans.

These targeted steps will continue the important work United Way and our network of front-line community service agencies deliver every day to support people experiencing poverty in the GTA.

And beyond the GTA, across the province, local United Ways are working hard to support local needs.

Helping that mom and dad, both working part time gigs, keep food on the table.

Reaching out to that youth struggling with mental illness. Making sure the personal support worker can visit your frail 92-year-old neighbour.

The need for support, close to home, has never been so vital. The need for community so clear.

And people have been reaching out, asking what they can do.

First take care of yourself and your family. Take a moment to connect with your community. Call your elderly neighbour, video-chat with a friend who lives alone, email someone who may be isolated.

Reach out to your local United Way to find out how our network of services and programs are helping people in your community. Ask if and how you can volunteer.

If you need help yourself, call 211 - a phone line that can connect you to the right information and local community services.

Because in times like these, people matter.

All people.

And community matters. The caring ties that connect and bind us. All of us. In a united way.

Daniele Zanotti is President and CEO of United Way Greater Toronto.

For more columns and news on the coronavirus crisis, visit our website at theifp.ca



ABOUT US

This newspaper, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 80 community publications across Ontario.

This newspaper is a member of the National NewsMedia Council. Complainants are urged to bring their concerns to the attention of the newspaper and, if not satisfied, write The National NewsMedia Council, Suite 200, 890 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4W 2H2. Phone: 416-340-1981 Web: www.mediacouncil.ca

nnc National NewsMedia Council
ocna
newsroom@theifp.ca
IndependentAndFreePress
@IFP_11

WHO WE ARE

Publisher
Kelly Montague
Regional General Manager
Steve Foreman
Regional Managing Editor
Catherine O'Hara
Managing Editor
Karen Miceli
Distribution Representative
Iouliana Polar
Real Estate
Kristie Pells
Regional Production Manager
Manuel Garcia
Production
Shelli Harrison
Halton Media General Manager
Vicki Dillane

CONTACT US

The Independent & Free Press
280 Guelph Street, Unit 77
Georgetown, ON L7G 4B1
Phone: 905-873-0301
Classifieds: 1-800-263-6480
Fax: 905-873-0398

Letters to the editor
All letters must be fewer than 320 words and include your name and telephone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject letters. Published letters will appear in print and/or online at theifp.ca

Delivery
For all delivery inquiries, please e-mail lpolar@mittoncanadianchampion.com or call 905-234-1019.

