Coping with COVID-19

Hemophilia of South Carolina's Annual Meeting

June 13, 2020

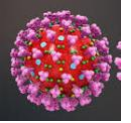Julia Johnston B.A. & Sarah Bills, M.A.

What is Coronavirus/COVID-19?

Coronavirus is a type of **virus** similar to the flu and the common cold.

A **virus** is a germ, smaller than you can see, that can make us sick when it gets inside us.

FUN FACT: **"Corona"** means **"crown"** in Latin. Coronavirus was named after spikes that make it look like it's wearing a crown!

Lots of people are talking about coronavirus because it's a **new** kind of virus that has spread around the world.

Coronavirus causes the disease called **COVID-19** which makes people sick. Most people with COVID-19 experience symptoms like

Coughing   Fever   Runny nose

These symptoms mean your body is fighting the virus!

But some people can get really sick and may need to get extra help from doctors to get better.

So…what can I do?

Great question! The best thing that we can do is try to keep ourselves and other people safe from the coronavirus. You can help **stop** coronavirus by:

Washing your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water

Wearing a mask when you're in public

publicdomainvectors.org

Staying home if you're feeling sick

COVID-19 and Mental Health

While taking care of our physical health is important, it is also important to take care of our **mental health**.

COVID-19 has caused a lot of **changes** in our daily lives by impacting work, school, social activities, and travel.

All of these changes can be challenging and stressful for families. Parents and teens may be experiencing increased **anxiety**, **sadness**, or **frustration** which can make day-to-day activities extra difficult.

This can be particularly challenging from teens with **chronic medical conditions**, like hemophilia and von Willebrand, and their families.

However, there are strategies and tools that we know can help!

Side effects of COVID-19:

- Isolation
- Changed schedules
- Increased stress
- Worry and fear
- Boredom
- Bereavement

How do I feel during COVID-19?

Confused   Irritated   Anxious   Surprised

Loving   Upset   Sad   Worried   Optimistic   Nostalgic

Overwhelmed   Curious   Lonely   Confident   Grief

Happy   Afraid   Frustrated   Motivated

Desperate   Joyful   Let down   Tearful   Skeptical

Deprived   Content   Grateful   Uncertain

Types of Coping

1. Problem-Focused Coping: targeting the stressor directly to change it or its influence

- Useful when a) the stressor is something within your control or b) when there are steps you can take to change how the stressor affects you.
- Examples: time management, seeking social support, making an action plan, goal setting.

2. Emotion-Focused Coping: aimed at reducing the negative emotions that a stressful experience brings about

- Useful when the stressor is something that is out of your control or is something that you do not feel prepared to change at the time.
- Examples: distraction, cognitive re-appraisal, expression (journaling, talking with close friends or family), engaging in activities that make you feel happy, meditation, prayer.

Coping Strategies for COVID-19

1. Keep a regular schedule – but be flexible!
    - We typically have a daily routine or schedule that we follow. This may involve eating breakfast at 7:30, going to school, playing sports after school, doing homework, etc. During the quarantine, our schedule has likely been disrupted. Sticking to a new routine – our Plan B schedule – can be helpful to keep us on track. Develop a new daily routine and stick to your schedule. Plan when you will wake up, have meals, and complete schoolwork.
    - PRACTICE GOOD TIME MANAGEMENT: Time management is extremely important to manage stress. Whether it means limiting time spent on social media, making time to spend time with friends or do your hobbies, or setting a homework schedule after work, time management is extremely important! This is a skill most people work on their whole lives. Discipline is important as well as taking breaks from work.
        i. POMODORO TECHNIQUE: The pomodoro technique is a great study strategy! Our brains are not wired to work for 6 hours straight. We need little breaks to recharge. Set a timer for 20-30 minutes. During this time, focus exclusively on schoolwork. Turn your phone on do-not-disturb. When the timer goes off, take a 5 to 10-minute break (also time this). This will help focus your efforts and increase your productivity.
    - SET GOALS: Set realistic goals for yourself and check them off when you reach them! It is important to have both big and small goals. Once you meet a few of the small goals, you start to gain momentum and feel more confident about your abilities.
    - BREAK IT UP INTO SMALLER TASKS: If you feel overwhelmed by everything you need to accomplish, make a step-by-step action plan. This can help you better understand the steps you need to take in order to manage your responsibilities.

2. Stay connected with friends and family

- Seek out friends, family, and loved ones to help you cope with your stress. You can reach others through the telephone, Facetime, Zoom, Skype, text, email, letters, or in-person from a safe distance (at *least* six feet away with all individuals wearing masks) and with permission from your caregiver.
- This is an **active** coping strategy!
- Seeking social support may mean arranging to spend time with friends or family. Especially during the pandemic, this requires planning in advance. Set a date, time, and mark it on your calendar!

3. Take care of your body!

- ### Diet

    i. Diet can affect your body's ability to fight off pathogens. Make sure to eat a variety of healthy foods like fruits and vegetables. Select nutrient-dense food and avoid processed foods such as cookies, cake, and seasoned chips. Drink at least eight 8-oz glasses of water each day. For more information on keeping a healthy diet: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/healthy-eating-for-teens/
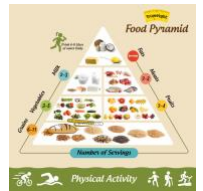
- ### Sleep

    i. Make a regular sleep routine (go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday).
    ii. Avoid naps if possible.
    iii. Only lie in your bed to go to sleep! Don't do schoolwork or other work in your bed.
    iv. Don't watch TV or read in bed. This trains your body to stay awake while in bed.
    v. Avoid caffeinated drinks after 12:00pm(noon).
    vi. Exercise regularly but avoid exercising at night or right before bed. This can keep you awake at night.
    vii. Make sure your bedroom is quiet and comfortable.

- ### Activity

    i. Make sure to get regular exercise during quarantine. Exercise is important in maintaining good physical and mental health. Exercise can reduce stress, too. Do at least one activity each day. You might try running, dance, biking, climbing stairs, walking, Zumba, tennis, strength training, or jumping rope. Always check to make sure that your selected exercise activities are approved for teens with bleedings disorders!

4. Be prepared, but not scared.

- While it is important to stay up to date on COVID-19 and ways to protect yourself, too much information can be overwhelming. Work with a caregiver or a trusted adult to determine how much time you will spend on media outlets and which media outlets you will review. If you are feeling particularly upset, consider removing news outlets for a while and reducing your time spent on the internet.

5. Remain positive

- ○ This is not an easy time, but there are still many positive things happening in the world! Use positive self-talk and ensure that you are exposed to some good news every day.

- ○ Positive self-talk includes phrases such as: I am hardworking. I am smart. I am loving and easily loved. I am a great friend. I am an exceptional student. I can do anything. Even if you do not believe some of these statements at first, still repeat them! This practice is meant to help you change your perspective and recognize just how capable, flexible, and strong you are.

6. Practice gratitude & kindness

- ○ Gratitude is an excellent way to boost positive emotions and gain a new perspective. Practicing gratitude has been shown to increase happiness, improve relationships, make you optimistic, and enhance your well-being.
- ○ Create a gratitude journal, note on your phone, or list in which you write down 5 things for which you are grateful each day.
- ○ Acts of kindness benefit the giver and the recipient. It also helps us develop a gratitude mindset. Consider helping out a family member, checking in with a friend, or helping a neighbor or vulnerable individual during quarantine.

7. Cope with your feelings (they are valid and important)

- ○ It is normal to have positive and negative emotions. Negative emotions can be unpleasant. However, avoiding these feelings can actually make them last longer or come up more frequently in the long run. Take some time each day to check in with yourself to see how you are feeling. Validate that this is a challenging time. Consider writing down your feelings in a journal or talking to a friend or family member about your feelings.

- ○ **Change your perspective:** Cognitive reappraisal involves recognizing a negative thought pattern or negative appraisal of a situation, taking a new perspective, and reappraising the situation as more positive and realistic.

    i. Example: "Quarantine is awful. I can't do school at home. I can't see my friends. I hate this."

    ii. Reappraisal: "It is okay that I feel upset by quarantine. Although I'm struggling to focus and complete my schoolwork at home, I can use planning strategies to complete it. I will schedule a zoom call with my friends tonight to cheer me up."

8. Make time for fun activities and hobbies!

- ○ When we are stressed about challenges in our life, we may not feel motivated to do *fun* activities. It may feel like extra work, but it is so important to continue to do the things that you enjoy.
- ○ COVID-19 may mean that you cannot do hobbies safely that you typically do. You may have to get creative about new activities.

- Walk
- Runn
- Paint
- Read

- Take online exercise classes
- Play music or instruments
- Cook and bake
- Travel virtually

- Play Board games
- Photography
- Crafts (crochet, jewelry making)
- Meditate

Cures for boredom:

- Virtual tours of museums, zoos, and more!
  - https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/travel/a31784720/best-virtual-tours/
- Free audiobooks for kids during COVID-19 through audible
  - https://stories.audible.com/start-listen