

## The importance of self-care during the coronavirus pandemic

In our current situation in particular, many of us must learn how to deal with our own fears and anxiety. Stressful situations can cause stress reactions in our body, for example elevated heart rates, restlessness or insomnia. Taking care of yourself and your health is more important than ever. This includes respecting your own inner feelings and striving for a healthy lifestyle.

We have gathered a few thoughts for you below that will hopefully help you better manage the mental stresses caused by the coronavirus crisis.

### Respecting your own feelings

What am I most preoccupied with in the current crisis? How can I manage these thoughts? Where does my anxiety come from? Why am I acting moody and irritable? Do not suppress these questions – look to them with honesty and openness. Permit yourself to feel these feelings and remember that anxiety is a normal human reaction to possible danger.

### Maintain your social contacts

Social isolation for extended periods of time is detrimental to many of us. That's why it is important, even now, to maintain contact with friends and family; if not in person, than by phone, chat or video call. Speak openly with friends and families about the current situation, your feelings and your hopes and plans for the future. Avoid focusing on the coronavirus too much: You have a lot more interesting things to talk about in your life than the coronavirus. Don't be afraid to laugh and share, and use this precious time to unwind and focus on something else than your fears and anxiety.

### Living healthy every day

A well-balanced diet is especially important in times of crisis. Be sure to drink plenty of water and avoid consuming coffee and alcohol. A healthy lifestyle also includes plenty of physical activity and rest. Try to maintain not only a normal sleep schedule, but a daily routine as well.

### Use trustworthy news sources

If you are looking for news and updates on the current situation, consult trustworthy sources such as government ministries, the Robert Koch Institute, or public radio.

### Reduce your media consumption

Try to reduce the amount of time you spend on your phone, in social networks or watching TV. Make a conscious decision how and when you want to use your electronic devices. Make sure to take regular breaks from the internet, TV and radio and put the extra free time this gives you to good use.

## Set active goals

Try to distract yourself. Use the time for the online yoga course of our Sports Department, cook something delicious, start a diary, listen to music, get active and, if possible, get some fresh air. Stick to positive, reaffirming activities that help reduce stress levels. Things that make you feel better also great against stress!

## Think about your strengths

Try to have a “glass half full” perspective: look at things in a positive light and remember that you are doing a good thing for others by practising social distancing. You’re helping yourself and others at the same time. Think about the social responsibility needed for this type of situation. Think about your inner strengths and redirect your thoughts to all the good and beautiful things you can experience even in times of crisis. Focus on your own strengths and abilities.

## Seek help if needed

If you're feeling desperate and anxious for days on end, if you can't shake the fear and tension, don't be afraid to seek out professional help.

- Rhine-Waal University will be offering psychological counselling services for students very soon.
- For emergencies, you can contact mental health professionals via a crisis support line. In Germany, you can speak to someone in English at 030-44 01 06 07 from 6 p.m. to 12 p.m.
- If you are Muslim, you can also contact a special crisis support number for assistance. This number is free, anonymous and available 24 hours a day at 030 - 44 35 09 821.

The German Society for the Prevention of Suicide (DGS) also maintains a range of advising services, self-help groups and psychiatric services for any person dealing with suicidal thoughts or their friends and relatives. More information is available [here](#).

## Sources (in German):

- <https://www.hochschule-ruhr-west.de/> (Retrieved April 2020)
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