



# HELPFUL TIPS TO MANAGE STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION



- **Acknowledge your feelings** – Yes, the situation is frightening, it is frustrating, and you feel out of control. It is ok to feel this way so allow yourself to feel; then make sure you focus more time on the things you can control and do.
- **Ask for help.** If you are really struggling to cope with the situation, don't be afraid to speak up. Call SADAG, talk to your counsellor, or create a WhatsApp or Facebook support group. Stay connected with people via technology – do more video calls, phone friends to catch up, etc.
- **Keep taking your medication** (if applicable). If you take medicine every month, speak to your health professional or pharmacist to get scripts filled in advance or arrange for home delivery.
- **Maintain a daily routine** as much as possible (e.g. get up, get dressed, create a to-do list, etc.). Try to stick to the same times for meals and bedtime.
- **Create a positive bedtime routine.** Avoid watching TV or looking at your phone before going to bed. Rather try reading a book or doing some relaxation breathing. This will help with the quality of your sleep. Set an alarm to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day to create a good sleep routine.
- **Create a list of things to do** to keep yourself busy and active. Make a list that you can stick up in a public space so the whole family can add ideas (e.g. reading books you haven't been able to get to for months, gardening, watching your favourite movies, do something creative like painting, drawing, poetry, listening to your favourite music, trying a new exercise at home, cleaning out the cupboards that you have been avoiding to do for months, etc.).
- **Do small things every day** that you enjoy and help lift your mood.
- **Go for a walk** – try daily to get outside the house for a walk or run around your neighbourhood or a park near by. Keep exercising, at least 3 times a week.
- **Practice relaxation techniques** to ease stress levels & help your immune system. [Introduction to breathing – mindfulness](#) – is a good technique to practice.
- **List what you can control** – your attitude, your thinking, your home, caring for your body and mind. Focus on these things.
- **Reach out to friends and family:** Make it a part of your daily routine Having a sense of connection and a feeling of community is essential for hope and healing.
- **Mute social media** accounts or WhatsApp groups that might trigger you or if you find them too overwhelming.

## COVID-19 SPECIFIC TIPS:

- **Avoid watching or reading fake news**, where facts can become blurred and exaggerated. Only read reliable resources where acknowledged experts like speaking about the coronavirus (e.g. [www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019), [www.sacoronavirus.co.za](http://www.sacoronavirus.co.za); and the National Department of Health Whatsapp 060 012 3456.
- Reduce the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage – filter what you are watching, reading, and listening to. Learn what you can from respected sources.
- **Protect yourself:** Discuss with family, friends, and neighbours what you can do to protect yourselves and be there for each other.
- **'Social connection remains so important':** Psychologist shares tips on coping with coronavirus anxiety.
- **How to identify the stages of grief in COVID-19** messages.

Adapted from: The South African Depression and Anxiety Group. Covid-19 – Helpful Tips to Manage Your Anxiety During This Time. Retrieved on 23 June 2020 from:

[http://www.sadag.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3095:covid-19-helpful-tips-to-manage-your-stress-and-anxiety-during-this-time&catid=11:general&Itemid=101](http://www.sadag.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3095:covid-19-helpful-tips-to-manage-your-stress-and-anxiety-during-this-time&catid=11:general&Itemid=101)