

## Dealing with Uncertainty: How to cope with COVID-19 anxiety

*"Your mindset during this crisis is everything.*

*Your perspective is the most powerful thing you can control in a situation that is beyond your control."*

A cancer diagnosis - regardless of its stage - is traumatic and anxiety producing.

Now we all (survivors, caregivers, family and friends) are dealing with the uncertainty of a pandemic and its effect on our daily lives. We're adjusting to a new normal and don't know how long it might last.

Below are some resources for **cop**ing with **uncertainty** and the stress that accompanies these unusual times.

Linked here is an excellent article from Forbes Magazine about the [Psychology of Uncertainty](#) in light of COVID-19.

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### Practice Self-Care

- **Maintain routines** as much as possible. If your old routine is no longer possible, CREATE a new one and do your best to stick to it.
- **Practice healthy habits and the kinds of self-care that most benefit you.** Prioritize getting a healthy amount of sleep, eat well, avoid alcohol, and move or exercise regularly as you are able.
- **Avoid crowds — but stay connected.** "Social Distancing" can mean you might find yourself disconnected from the people you would normally see every day like co-workers or friends. If so, make an extra effort to stay connected through social media, email, texting, and video calls.
- **Engage in online or phone conversations** about something other than COVID-19 or cancer.
- **Take breaks to ease your mind and distract yourself when you start to worry.** Play a game. Watch a movie. Listen to music. Read a book. Check out an online yoga class. Try a meditation app. Go outside for a breath of fresh air!
- **Separate what is in your control from what is not.** There are things you can do, and it's helpful to focus on those. Wash your hands. Remind others to wash theirs. Take your vitamins. Limit your consumption of news.
- **Challenge yourself to stay in the present** Perhaps your worry is compounding—you are not only thinking about what is currently happening, but also projecting into the future. When you find yourself worrying about something that hasn't happened, gently bring yourself back to the present moment. Notice the sights, sounds, tastes and other

sensory experiences in your immediate moment and name them.

Engaging in mindfulness activities is one way to help stay grounded when things feel beyond your control.

- **Look to the future.** Remember that this situation is temporary and you have things to look forward to! Make a list of what you want to do when you are able. (Remember, Jodi's Race is on the horizon and WILL happen either in June or a later date! [www.JodisRace.org](http://www.JodisRace.org))

*Social Distancing does not mean isolation!*

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## Get Support

If what you are feeling seems bigger than what these techniques can support, we are here to help.

If you are an ovarian cancer survivor or caregiver, we are available to talk by phone with you about the emotional challenges of cancer and COVID-19. Contact us at **720-724-8612** or [katlyn@colo-ovariancancer.org](mailto:katlyn@colo-ovariancancer.org) to set up a time to connect, or fill out our **Consent to Contact** form and we will follow up with you. Our “professional mentors” are master’s level counselors trained as part of our Individual Support Program (ISP).

All Nicki's Circle Support Groups are now taking place by phone. You can find the schedule and information about participating here: **Nicki's Circle**

*You are not alone! We are here for you!*

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## Educate Yourself

**Seek news only from reliable sources, and only in short stints.**

It's easy to over-consume news and updates. Try not to become absorbed in the coverage for long periods of time, and find opportunities to appropriately disconnect. Perhaps set aside a time each day to update yourself on events. When that time is over, disengage and redirect your focus.

Keep yourself informed by referring to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) or your state and local governments for the most up-to-date information.

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
  - [Colorado State Government](#)
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## Keep the virus at bay

- **Wash your hands** often with soap for 10-20 seconds or use a greater than 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer whenever you return home from any activity that involves locations where other people have been. (*No hand sanitizer? Check out this [recipe](#) for making yours at home.*)
- Practice **social distancing**, at least 6 feet from others.
- Refrain from touching your face.

- **No handshaking.** Use a fist bump, slight bow, or elbow bump.
  - Use your **knuckle** to touch light switches, elevator buttons, etc. Lift the gasoline dispenser with a paper towel or use a disposable glove.
  - **Open doors with your closed fist or hip**—do not grasp the handle with your hand, unless there is no other way to open the door, especially on bathroom post office and commercial doors.
  - **Use disinfectant wipes** at the stores when available, including wiping the handle and child seat in grocery carts.
  - Keep a bottle of **sanitizer** available at each of your home's entrances and in your car for use after getting gas or touching other contaminated objects when you can't immediately wash your hands.
  - If possible, **cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue** and discard. Use your elbow only if you have to as the virus can linger on clothing.
  - Be proactive and keep your immune system strong, get ample sleep, exercise and eat well.
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## Cancer and COVID-19

Check out COCA's email about COVID-19 and Cancer sent earlier this week to learn more about managing your care during the pandemic.

[March 9, 2020 Newsletter](#)

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*Wishing you wellness and peace.*