

## Managing Stress and Anxiety

### Common Reactions

As the situation relating to COVID-19 unfolds, including news reports, travel restrictions, and concerns for your own and your loved ones' health - people can experience a wide range of thoughts, feelings and reactions. You or someone you know may experience periods of:

- Feeling stressed or overwhelmed
- Anxiety, worry, or fear
- Sadness, tearfulness, and/or loss of interest in usual enjoyable activities
- Physical symptoms, such as increased heart rate, stomach upset, low energy, headaches
- Frustration, irritability, or anger
- Feeling helpless
- Difficulty concentrating or sleeping
- Isolating or withdrawing from others, and/or fear of going to public spaces

### Strategies to cope with stress, anxiety or distress

- **Acknowledge your feelings.** In situations that are uncertain and evolving such as this, it's understandable to feel stressed, anxious, or upset, among other emotional reactions. Allow yourself time to notice and express what you're feeling. This could be by writing them down in a journal, talking to others, doing something creative, or [practicing meditation](#).
- **Maintain your day-to-day normal activities and routine where possible.** Having a healthy routine can have a positive impact on your thoughts and feelings. This can include: eating healthy meals, physical exercise like walking, running or stretching, [getting enough sleep](#), and doing things you enjoy.
- **Set limits around news and social media.** It's understandable to want to keep informed, especially if you or your loved ones are affected. At the same time, constantly reading, watching, or listening to upsetting media coverage can intensify worry and agitation. Take a break from news or social media and focus on things that are positive in your life and actions you have control over.
- **Stay connected.** Receiving support and care from others has a powerful effect on helping us cope with challenges. Talking through our concerns, thoughts, and feelings with others can also help us find helpful ways of thinking about or dealing with a stressful situation in healthy and positive ways. Please email me if you feel the need to talk and we can schedule a phone or video call. [aminahwells@gfs.org](mailto:aminahwells@gfs.org)