

# COVID-19 / Coronavirus

## Emotional Responses - What to Expect?

The following are some of common reactions to COVID – 19, they are experienced in crisis situations where uncertainty is observed

**Fear** - often experienced due to perceived threat to life and safety.

**What you need to do:**

- Acknowledge fear as a normal reaction to threats to safety in yourself, staff and coworkers.
- Fear is linked to survival
- Fear can lead to panic reactions (when we perceive the pandemic as contagious, when we perceive that we have not opportunity to channel our uncertainty and when we perceive our opportunities for adaptive coping as lacking or limited).
- Seek out timely and accurate information from the correct source.

**Anger** - This is a common response to feelings of helplessness and unable to control a situation.

**What you need to do:**

- Diffuse anger through listening; “understand first then seek to be understood”.
- Anger is energy/ power – redirect it or any strong anger emotions to productive activities that will in return be rewarding within a group or individual activities.
- For example, with COVID -19 “what can we do together to help one another?”

**Anxiety/worry** - Can be mistaken for fear. Often experienced because of specific concerns e.g. financial security, health and safety. Anxiety can also be related to non - specific concerns like lack of control, which is the most difficult type of anxiety to deal with.

**What to do:**

- Be active – intellectually and physically
- Actively participate in discussions seeking solutions
- Do something constructive to alleviate anxiety
- Encourage health habits and coping resources
- Ensure a regular routine, this can ease excessive worrying

**Loss/separation** - Multiples losses are associated with pandemics:

- Economic/financial
- General loss of feeling in control
- Separation from friends /family
- During later/more severe stages: death of loved ones

**What can you do?**

- Empathize and validate the experience
- Generally social support reduces feelings of uncertainty, enhances positive coping! How is your social support network?
- Seek support from your beliefs and rituals
- Recognize the unique nature of loss in a pandemic crisis (e.g. contagion, sustained periods of uncertainty, alterations in burial rituals, etc.)