

Synapse Libate & Learn: Its OK to Not Feel OK. Coping Through COVID and Beyond

05.26.2020

Visit [Synapse Resources](#) - a free community platform for innovators to find what they need and share what they have

Is it normal to NOT feel OK right now?

Yes. Individually and collectively we are all dealing with our own feelings of loss and grief. It is unnatural to face this level of uncertainty for this long. Our natural instincts will emerge: fight, flight, freeze

Resilience - the healing is in the return. Resilience is the ability to begin again; each day is a chance for a fresh start. When someone asks how you're doing, answer honestly. Pause before you reflexively respond. Choose your adjective mindfully.

Our brains are naturally wired towards negative thoughts. But neuroplasticity means that with practice and intentionality we can train our brains to focus on gratitude and positivity, rather than ruminating on the negative. Be open to post-traumatic growth from this experience.

How we frame this experience for ourselves and others will shape our responses.

Leaders set the tone - social referencing is how others around you respond to your approach (employees, kids and family)

If you're encouraging your employees to share their feelings, are you also providing them with resources to get help? How an employer should approach an employee whose productivity is suffering now - document those issues in the moment with the actions that reflect issues, don't diagnose anyone or label them.

Labels are dangerous!

How can we help people who are struggling? What can we say or do to support them?

Understand first what is upsetting someone - telling someone to "calm down" can be invalidating (and infuriating) Validate their feelings with empathy. You don't need to offer solutions. "That's brutal" or "That sucks" is an OK response.

The world was already in an epidemic of loneliness before COVID, which can be worse for our health than smoking. Recognize the need for meaningful human interaction.

Have 3 people you can implicitly trust who won't judge you, whom you can be totally honest with about anything.

Helping Our Kids Manage Their Own Stress Right Now

Social referencing through non-verbal communication especially as parents and grandparents is essential Structure is critical for adults *and* kids

Encourage your kids to talk about how they're feeling and don't be reluctant to seek help

Be realistic about your expectations of yourself as a parent, don't expect perfection. Model resilience.

Put on your own oxygen mask first; you need to take care of yourself in order to effectively take care of others.

Don't dismiss kid's health complaints, they may need medical support for physical or mental health concerns. I.e.

vague physical complaints, clinginess, changes to sleep/eating habits, irritability, ensure you have sufficient medications if your child is taking something, children already with a mental illness are more susceptible to increased difficulty.

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Peer support is an valuable supplement to clinical support

Focus on your social connections especially those you haven't spoken to - social distancing is leading to emotional distancing but connections are what will enable resilience.

Take a step back, don't join a tantrum, breathe in and breathe out more slowly with a longer exhale to help press a reset.

Johnny's rule of 3:

1. Do one thing the same - something you did "before"
2. Do one thing different - a new book, new music, new route on your walk, learn about a new topic, etc.
3. Reach out to one person every day- reconnect with someone you haven't spoken with in some time

See below for helpful resources:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us>

<https://www.nami.org/Home>

<https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/mental-health-resources/anxiety>

<https://www.amazon.com/Calming-Your-Anxious-Mind-Mindfulness/dp/1572244879>

<https://insighttimer.com>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare.asp>

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>

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Free Meditations from Jack Kornfield-Pandemic Resources

<https://jackkornfield.com/pandemic-resources/>

COVID-19 Well-Being Tool Kit and Resources-Center for Healthy Minds-University of Wisconsin-Madison

<https://centerhealthyminds.org/well-being-toolkit-covid19>

Parenting in a pandemic

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/kids-regressing-help-them-cope-with-stress-during-coronavirus>

Helping Children and Parents Cope with COVID-7-Dippity (Free PDF)

<http://www.7-dippity.com/other/covid-19.html>.

Thank you to our panelists!

[Johnny Crowder](#), Founder & CEO, [Cope Notes](#), [Johnny's TedX Talk](#)

[Dr. Ashley Vigil-Otero](#), Psy. D., [Licensed Clinical Psychologist](#)

[Dr. Rahul Mehra](#), CEO & Chief Physician Executive, [National Center for Performance Health](#)

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How to Manage Anxiety

BlessingManifesting.com

Routine

Create a nourishing routine. Anxiety thrives on turbulence and uncertainty. I've found that coming up with a **good routine** helps eliminate a lot of it.

Rationalize

Anxiety likes to pull out the Worst-Case-Scenario. Tell yourself over and over that it's not going to be as bad as you imagine. Focus on reality.

Talk

Don't be afraid to talk about your anxiety. A lot of people experience it on some level. Find friends that will be able to help you rationalize. Help break the stigma.

Schedule

If there's something that's triggering your anxiety **try scheduling** it into your day/week. Then do your best to stick to it. Putting it off indefinitely only makes it worse.

Mindfulness

Find things to occupy your mind. Be the thing that calms you down. Focus on taking care of yourself in all ways.

Read the full article on BlessingManifesting.com