



Managing COVID-19 Fear and Stress

Part 5: Psychological Reactions to COVID-19 –
and What We Can Do About It.

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- Nearly all reactions to a global pandemic can be considered **normal**. It's incredibly important to validate your experience and recognize that you (and those around you) are experiencing normal reactions to an “abnormal” event.
- Stress reactions are a result of how you appraise the resources you have to respond to a threat or challenge. How you **cope** with the incident has a big role to play in your mental health outcomes.
- When we have more control over the situation, we engage in **problem-focused coping**; when we have less control, we engage in **emotion-focused coping** strategies.
- Even if your experiences with COVID-19 are negative – fear, anxiety, loss, grief – you ultimately want to find a way to create **meaning**. Meaning-making leads to resilience.
- **Negative** coping mechanisms include physical or mental abuse, as well as substance abuse, but we also want to consider more subtle, negative coping strategies: media viewing, for example, can be negative for us if we spend too much time getting information from unreliable sources (such as social media) or simply spend way too much time watching or reading the news.
- **Positive** coping includes exercise & wellness activities, social connectedness, celebrating your community, and reframing your thoughts to focus on what you are grateful.
- You need to **take care of yourself** before you can be a resource and leader for others. Be sure to prioritize your emotional and psychological needs during this time.