



Managing in the current health situation

Dear Colleagues, we are sorry to hear about the current health situation. Our sincere wishes to everyone. When there is an outbreak, like the one for COVID 19, it can lead to some psychological impacts.

1. We can become very worried about our own health and that of others. This can affect our thinking and emotions.

It is important to take all possible safety measures as mentioned by the Chief of Mission and the IOM Staff Advisories.

It is best to only pay attention to information from reliable sources such as OHU and WHO. It is important not to listen to or pass on rumours.

Please continue to use your everyday coping mechanisms for managing stress and worry including being compassionate. If you would like to learn more, then have a look at the programme on stress management which is also available in French and Spanish. <https://www.iom.int/my-wellbeing>

2. If you have children, they are also likely to be concerned and worried. Please remind them to only look at reliable media sources and to ask you about any questions they may have.

Younger children are usually not able to speak about their emotions but may behave inappropriately. If they do, perhaps ask them why and reassure them that you are doing your best to keep them safe. It may help to create a story about the current situation and how to help and look after each other. This can then be repeated as needed.

3. Our perception of the risks involved can be increased, in terms of our thinking and emotions about the risks that are present. For example, we can become very concerned when someone coughs or sneezes near us. This is a natural reaction to the current situation and will decrease as the situation de-escalates. It is important to separate the facts from perception and double-check with reliable sources.

4. Remote working

Make sure that you create a separation between work and home-life, both in terms of time and where you work. Perhaps select one area where you will work and have a box/file into which you can place work papers at the end of the day. Plan your work with your supervisor and colleagues so that there is clarity.

Make sure you take virtual coffee breaks, maybe arrange one with a colleague so you can share and have an informal discussion by phone. Use technology to have virtual meetings etc. It is important to communicate more than you think is needed.

Try to maintain your everyday coping strategies as well as the ones we have described. Make plans for your future.

What will be your plan for coping and managing?

Contact details: Staff Welfare (swo@iom.int) , Occupational Health (ohugva@iom.int; ohumac@iom.int), your local health care provider. Further information is available from: iom.int staff welfare

