



Understanding our reactions to the current health situation

When we become stressed, it is very difficult to think clearly, manage our emotions and behaviours. We are all experiencing higher levels of stress than usual because of the current situation. However, we cannot keep functioning at these levels and so it is important to work out how to stabilise the situation for ourselves, our colleagues, friends and family.

Here are some suggestions.

1. Make sure you follow all of the safe hygiene precautions as advised by OHU and WHO. It is vital that you make these a daily practice even if you are reluctant.
2. Only pay attention to information from reliable sources, not rumour or gossip. Ration how often you look for updates unless it is necessary.
3. Think about your coping strategies. Which ones do you need now so you can stabilise your current approach? Make sure that you breathe properly and slowly. Ensure that you get enough sleep and rest. Consume healthy food and drink.
4. Think about your current approach to the risks of the situation, are you being safe? If not, what can you do to adopt safer behaviours? Make concrete plans for your worries, double check your proposed actions and behaviours and then continue with your day.

Take time to stop, pause and plan your day. Ensure you take regular breaks.

Know that you may not be making good decisions. How will you double-check your choices?

Appreciate that your memory could be faulty. Keep a note pad with you to write down vital facts etc.

Work more slowly and carefully, we are more likely to make errors when we are stressed.

If you manage staff, how will you reassure them through your behaviours? For example, enable longer deadlines.

5. Be patient with yourself and others. This will help us all manage the uncertainty of the situation. How can you be kinder to each other? How could you further support the people in your life?
6. If you become emotional, then pause, walk away from the situation and think of something helpful and positive, e.g. a song or a past event until you become more balanced.
7. If you become really worried, then write down your worries and look at the evidence for your worries. What is real and how will you cope? What is simply misperception?

If you have mental health concerns, e.g. anxiety, then please contact your own professionals or Staff Welfare (swo@iom.int).

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

