

# Managing the Fear of Coronavirus

Due to reports of Coronavirus cases in the U.S., many people are expressing fear and anxiety about this potentially serious illness. While it is understandable to worry about the health and safety of ourselves and our loved ones, it is important to manage our anxiety. Few make good decisions based on fear, and the 24/7 media coverage- much of it gloomy- often obscures reality and adds to a sense of panic. Taking care of your emotions, especially during times of higher stress and anxiety, is a good first step to protecting yourself and those you love.

## Common Reactions

- Fear and anxiety- about you or someone you know contracting the virus; thinking over and over about the virus spreading.
- Irritability- becoming easily angry or annoyed, or feeling “on edge”
- Physical reactions-headaches, upset stomach, or muscle tension
- Difficulty concentrating-being preoccupied with thoughts related to the virus
- Insomnia- difficulty sleeping due to anxiety and worrying
- Information overload- repeatedly monitoring media and website for the latest news on the virus

## Self-Care/Coping with the Stress Caused by a Health Crisis

- Maintain perspective and remind yourself of the facts- how real this threat to me is right now?
- Try to follow as many routine activities as possible, as this enhances comfort and predictability.
- Talk with friends, family, coworkers or a counselor about your feelings and concerns.
- Engage in some form of exercise daily; this is very effective at reducing stress.
- Limit your intake of news related to the virus.
- Do things you enjoy. Part of taking care of yourself is making time to let go and engage in positive activities; this helps give your mind a break from worry and helps maintain balance.
- Relax; use deep breathing, meditation, prayer or other relaxation techniques that work for you.
- Call the EAP for confidential assistance with many problems, including coping with health fears.
- Focus on things you have control over by creating an emergency plan, so you and your family will know what to do in a crisis; **American Red Cross- how to make an emergency plan**, has simple steps you can take to create a plan or check out **Creating an Emergency Plan for Coronavirus**.

Although Coronavirus is a health issue that is being taken very seriously by public health authorities worldwide, do not let your worry about this virus control your life. For more information on Coronavirus, visit the **Center for Disease Control and Prevention**. Here is helpful information from the CDC on **personal preparedness**.