

Managing Fears and Anxiety around Coronavirus



As information about Coronavirus unfolds, there can be a wide range of thoughts, feelings and reactions. Below is some helpful information and resources.

Common Reactions

Please recognize that there can be a wide range of reactions and that over the next few days or weeks you may experience periods of:

- Anxiety, worry, panic
- Feeling helplessness
- Social withdrawal
- Difficulty concentrating and sleeping
- Hyper-vigilance to your health and body
- Anger
- Xenophobia: fears about interacting with those who might be from Asia and guilt about these feelings

Ways to Manage Fears & Anxieties

Although Coronavirus is a health issue that is being taken very seriously by the campus and public health authorities worldwide, do not let your worry about this virus control your life. There are many simple and effective ways to manage your fears and anxieties. Many of them are essential ingredients for a healthy lifestyle; adopting them can help improve your overall emotional and physical well-being.

- **Get the facts.** Stay informed with the latest health and campus information through the health advisory at uhs.berkeley.edu/coronavirus. For further information, see the dedicated [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov).
- **Keep things in perspective.** Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you spend watching or listening to upsetting media coverage. Although you'll want to keep informed — especially if you have loved ones in affected countries — remember to take a break from watching the news and focus on the things that are positive in your life and things you have control over.
- **Be mindful of your assumptions about others.** We cannot assume that someone who appears to be of Asian descent is from China or has been exposed to the virus. Also, someone who has a cough or a fever does not necessarily have coronavirus. Self-awareness is important in not stigmatizing others in our community.
- **Stay healthy.** Adopting healthy hygienic habits such as washing your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, frequently, and certainly after sneezing or before/after touching your face or a sick person. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Avoid contact with others who are sick and stay home while sick.
- **Keep connected.** Maintaining social networks can help maintain a sense of normalcy, and provide valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress.
- **Seek additional help.** Individuals who feel an overwhelming worry or anxiety can seek additional professional mental health support.