



NH Employee Assistance Program

Healthy people ask for help.

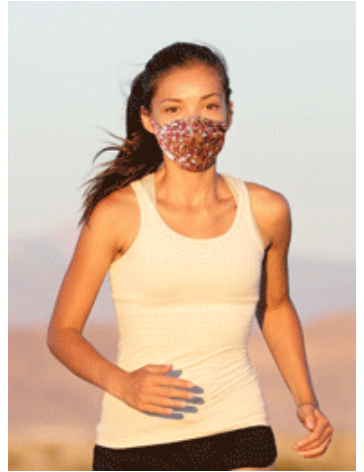
603.271.4336

Running the COVID Marathon

After months of being careful, concerned, isolating and physically distancing – we have a new name for what we are all experiencing – COVID fatigue. The continuing pandemic situation means we are now facing a double challenge – not just the ongoing daily stress of living with the virus, but also the prolonged uncertainty about how long it will last. And being able to deal with this is important both for our physical and mental health.

There are no easy solutions, but we do have ways to help ourselves, our families, and others. Recognizing why we are feeling that everything is different can help. Especially as the continued challenges and ongoing stress of being in a pandemic pile up – it's easy to lose our optimism, to get discouraged, and start having negative reactions.

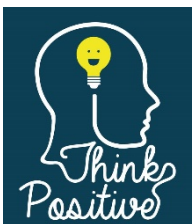
So perhaps it's time to revisit some helpful coping skills. Perhaps the best ones for this particular time include:



Exercise is a great way to help us cope. Any exercise or physical activity will release endorphins which reduces accumulated adrenaline that occurs when stress and frustration builds up. Since many of our favorite exercise outlets have closed or have severely limited access, we have to become more creative to become active. One approach is trying to exercise with family members or others in the same situation who we can participate safely.



Talking to others Sometimes just discussing what's going on with an understanding person can really lift our spirits. Find the right place and time. Ignoring feelings doesn't make them go away. It's like trying to hold an inflated pool toy underwater – eventually it pops out – and then you can't control who gets hit or where it ends up. If you're someone who rarely gets upset and find yourself near tears, or things that typically do not bother you are causing frustration. Those could be signs that reaching out and talking to somebody might be a good idea.



Thinking positively our feelings come from our thoughts. We can't change the situation, but we can try to adjust our thinking. Remind yourself, that we are all doing the best we can while running the COVID Marathon. It's helpful to remind ourselves that things have changed and we can help by doing our part by staying safe.



Staying present in the moment by just being aware of, and by being easy on yourself. We can put ourselves through a lot of unnecessary distress by overthinking about the future or the past. For now, try to just take it one moment at a time and one day at a time; pace yourself.



Step out of yourself by looking out for family, friends, and coworkers. Helping others cope with their stress, by providing support not only makes them stronger, but will help boost your own mood and increase your own endurance. During times of increased physical distancing, people can still maintain social connections. Reaching out with phone calls or video chats can help us all feel more connected, and less lonely and isolated.

A big part of COVID fatigue is that sense of lack of control we feel when we realize we don't know how long this situation will continue. So, when you find yourself wanting to go out to eat, visit family, or travel again, remember there really is only one way each of us can make that happen – by staying safe and following health guidelines. Wear your mask, maintain proper safe distance, keep your social interactions outside, wash your hands frequently, and do everything else to stay safe. That's how you can take back control.

Compliments of: The State of NH Employee Assistance Program, in partnership with Bernie McCann, PhD, CEAP.