

# MENTAL HEALTH TIPS FOR COPING WITH COVID-19 CONCERNS

## Recognizing Distress

- Increased anxiety, worry, fear, and feelings of being overwhelmed
- Depressive symptoms that persist and/or intensify
- Inability to focus or concentrate accompanied by decreased academic performance
- A feeling of hopelessness and/or a paralyzing fear about the future
- Sudden anger and disruptive behaviors or noticeable changes in personality
- Sleep difficulties
- Excessive crying
- Isolating or withdrawing from others, fear of going into public situations
- Unhealthy coping (e.g., increased alcohol or drug use, engaging in risky/impulsive behaviors)

## Mental Health Tips

- **Acknowledge reactions.** Allow yourself time to reflect on what you are feeling and how you may be reacting to any fears and uncertainties of the future.
- **Maintain your day-to-day normal activities and social outlets as much as possible.** Resist withdrawing and isolating yourself from the support and caring that others can provide. Connect with family, friends, and communities over social media, Facetime, or by other means.
- **Seek accurate information** and limit exposure to social media and news reports that provide no new information. Go to [twu.ca](http://twu.ca) and click on the banner for *COVID-19 Response Information*.
- **Pay attention to positive news** instead of only focusing on negative and fear-producing reports.
- **Follow the protection and prevention tips given by medical professionals** such as the Wellness Centre here on campus, national medical authorities, and your own medical doctor.
- **Practice calming rituals.** Stay grounded in the present moment, which can help you maintain an internal sense of stability and balance when outside events feel threatening.
- **Seek supports & use campus resources.** Reach out to friends and family and learn about available campus resources. If you or someone you know has high distress, talk about it with others (such as a friend or RD) or submit a counselling intake: [www.twu.ca/wellness](http://www.twu.ca/wellness). Your campus community is here to help!

## Avoid Stigmatizing

- **Be aware of your behavior or attitude** change towards others from another country.
- **Avoid generalizing anyone who is sick** as potentially having the COVID-19 virus.
- **Examine any rigid thoughts, bodily tensions or heightened emotions** that can emerge when there is uncertainty, and treat with curiosity and compassion.