

Dodge depression during coronavirus pandemic

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There's no doubt about it: Staying at home, worrying about jobs and

finances, is a recipe for depression during the coronavirus pandemic.

But one expert offers some tips on how to maintain [good mental health](#) during this difficult time.

"The current situation has many of us feeling helpless, fearful and adrift," said Dr. Donna Anthony, chief medical officer at Gracie Square Hospital in New York City.

"In order to get through this crisis, it is important to acknowledge these feelings and proactively manage stress, maintain your health, and find ways to cope when things seem darkest. We don't know when our lives will return to a semblance of normality, but in the meantime, there are steps we can take to make ourselves feel better," Anthony said in a hospital news release.

People who already struggled with depression and anxiety may find it even more difficult now, and even those who haven't faced those [mental health challenges](#) may feel anxious, afraid and lonely.

Take a step back and examine your feelings, Anthony suggested. Be non-judgmental and compassionate toward yourself. Distract yourself from negative thoughts. If you're bored, do something. If you're lonely or frightened, call a friend.

Your body is better able to fight stress if you take care of it. Eat healthy, well-balanced meals and get enough rest and sleep. Don't try to relieve stress by self-medicating with drugs, alcohol or [compulsive behaviors](#), such as eating, Anthony advised.

Maintaining [daily routines](#) can help you feel in control of your life, she added. Wake up at the same time each day, shower, dress and get some exercise by walking around your home if you can't go outside. It's

especially important to structure your day if you're off from work. If you're working from home, be sure to take breaks.

Work on hobbies and other interests, seek out [social support](#), and relax through meditation, breathing, massage, listening to or making music, singing and creating art.

News can be especially stressful, so set limits on how much you consume, and try to get it from reputable sources, Anthony said.

More information: The National Alliance on Mental Illness offers more [coping strategies during the coronavirus pandemic](#).

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