

Protecting Your Mental Health in the Face of Uncertainty

Adapted from information provided by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the University of Michigan.



1

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

There are many things in our lives that are out of our control. Focusing on what is out of our control will increase negative thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Instead, try to re-frame your thinking and separate what is in your control from what is not. There *are* things you can control, and it's helpful to focus on those. Examples could include your attitude, actions, and behaviors.



2

JUST BREATHE

Whenever you start to feel overwhelmed by your to-do list or your worries, a few deep breaths can steady and calm you. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose, hold the breath for a moment, then exhale slowly through your mouth. Repeat until you feel better. Slow, deep, controlled breathing is a simple yet powerful way to stop the stress response in its tracks and help you regain your focus and energy.



3

SHIFT YOUR MINDSET

Shifting your mindset can also make an enormous impact on your mental health and well-being. Thinking negatively about your circumstances can be hurtful on many levels – to combat this, try to identify negative thoughts in your day-to-day life and then think through ways to shift that mindset in a positive way. For example, instead of "I'm stuck at home" try thinking "I get to be SAFE in my home and spend time with my family."



4

STAY IN THE PRESENT

Perhaps your worry is compounding—you are not only thinking about the present, but also predicting the future. When you find yourself worrying about something that hasn't happened, gently bring yourself back to the present moment. Notice the sights, sounds, tastes and other sensory experiences in your immediate moment and name them. Engaging in mindfulness activities is one way to stay grounded when things feel beyond our control. Breathing is a wonderful way to relieve stress anytime and anywhere. You can even repeat a calming phrase in your mind as you breathe, such as "inhale peace" and "exhale stress".



5

ASK FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT

It is completely normal to feel overwhelmed, anxious, scared, disappointed, or many other things. The Counseling Center is still available for you during this time; email Dave Enters (Dave.Enters@cuw.edu) to learn about the services available. Campus Ministry is still available to support you, too. Contact Pastor Smith (Steve.Smith@cuw.edu) for support, or join CUAA for these events: Daily Chapel weekdays at 9:30AM (CT) on Zoom, Zooming through the Psalms on Wednesdays at 11:00AM (CT), or a student-led Bible Study Thursdays at 3:00PM (ET) on Zoom.

