If you are feeling stressed, anxious, sad, scared or even frustrated right now, know you're not alone.

COVID has resulted in changes to how we live our lives, routines, patterns and mindsets - changing how we work, study, connect with each other and more.

Thus feelings of worry, stress, tension, anxiety, numbness, sadness are normal responses to periods of crises.

"What we are experiencing right now is unprecedented, unusual & extraordinary."

— Pooja Nair, QACP Faculty, MHP
mental health is an important part of the conversation.

mindset switch from ‘living’ to ‘survival’

- DESPAIR
- FEAR for loved ones lives
- DECREASED JOB/FINANCIAL SECURITY
- INCREASED HEALTH ANXIETY
- SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL
- LONELINESS
normal human responses to a global pandemic:

- Food and eating challenges & difficulties
- Resurgence of compulsive and addictive behaviour
- Obsessive or intrusive thoughts, memories or fears
- Generalised fear, anxiety, panic & overwhelm
- Depression, dissociation, shutdown, freeze, hopelessness
- Feelings of abandonment or loneliness or isolation
- Sense of loss of control or powerlessnesss. Feeling confused
- Anxiety around money, shelter, food and other survival needs
- Past traumas being triggered, activated or re-experienced
- Health anxiety heightened (about COVID-19 and otherwise)
- Feeling like existing chronic needs are being ignored
- Thoughts and feelings about death and dying
- New and old grief surfacing
- Feelings of anger, irritation and frustration
- Caring for everyone to one’s own detriment
- Feeling exhausted, fatigued, unmotivated, lethargic
- Hyper-focus, surges of energy, keep ‘doing’ to distract
how stress affects the body.

**SKIN**
- hair loss, dull/brittle hair, brittle nails, dry skin, acne, delayed tissue repair

**IMMUNE SYSTEM**
- decreased immune function, lowered immune defenses, increased risk of becoming ill, increase in recovery time

**REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM**
- decreased hormone production, decrease in libido, increase in PMS symptoms

**GUT**
- nutrient absorption, diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, bloating, pain and discomfort

**BRAIN**
- difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression, irritability, mood, mind fog

**CARDIO-VASCULAR**
- higher cholesterol, high blood pressure, increased risk of heart attack & stroke

**JOINTS & MUSCLES**
- increased inflammation, tension, aches and pains, muscle tightness
signs of stress

**PHYSICAL**
- tense muscles
- feeling exhausted
- disturbed sleep patterns
- chronic headaches
- change in appetite
- weakened immune system
- tummy trouble
- body ache
- elevated resting heartbeat

**PSYCHOLOGICAL**
- forgetting things
- feeling disorganized
- procrastinating
- inability to concentrate
- constant worrying
- withdrawing from others
- easily agitated/irritated
- trouble making decisions
- low self-esteem & feelings of worthlessness
- inability to relax even on days off
dealing with stress & anxiety

- accept that you cannot control everything
- do your best instead of aiming for perfection
- practice selfcare
- learn what triggers your anxiety & how you have coped before
- reduce your news intake to only trusted sources
dealing with uncertainty & isolation

remind yourself what is certain -- focus on the things that ground you

create a sense of flexible structure & routine

focus on short-term goals & tasks

use social media for good. Follow communities coming together for relief work

stay connected with others, use all technology to stay engaged with friends and family
## Types of Self-Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSICAL</th>
<th>EMOTIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>moving your body</td>
<td>understanding your feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what you eat</td>
<td>coping mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amount of sleep</td>
<td>expressing yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL</td>
<td>PRACTICAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discovering what you believe</td>
<td>household chores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creating a practice</td>
<td>organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meditation</td>
<td>safety and security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>PERSONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good support system</td>
<td>creating core values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boundaries</td>
<td>hobbies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>time alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL MEDIA</td>
<td>PROFESSIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good boundaries</td>
<td>work boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no endless scrolling</td>
<td>positive work environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>continued learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
stealth mindfulness.

**SHOWERING**
Let your shower take over your senses. Listen to the water, feel the water on your skin. Inhale the steam & smell of the soap. Massage your scalp while shampooing. Leave feeling refreshed.

**BED-MAKING**
As a moving meditation, mindfully breathe while smoothing and tucking your sheets. Make your bed your absolute and only focus for a few moments.

**GETTING DRESSED**
Be fully present in choosing and putting on your clothes. Take in the colours and feel the textures of each garment. Bring your attention to every detail, like buttons, zippers, and laces.

**WALKING**
Concentrate on the physical sensations of walking and how every step feels as you raise your legs and set your feet on the ground.

**WAITING IN LINE**
Take a few deep breaths, to center yourself while waiting. Acknowledge your immediate surroundings & the presence of others while wishing them well.

**EATING**
While eating, let all your attention go to how your food tastes, how the aroma hits your nose, and the texture inside your mouth.
grounding exercise: 5-4-3-2-1

using the 5-4-3-2-1 technique, you will purposefully take in details of your surroundings using each of your senses. Strive to notice small details that your mind would usually tune out, such as distant sounds, or the texture of an ordinary object.

what are 5 things you can see?  
what are 4 things you can feel?  
what are 3 things you can hear?  
what are 2 things you can smell?  
what is 1 thing you can taste?