

LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

The current COVID-19 pandemic has many of us acting jumpy, scared, nervous and moody. News reports on the increasing number of people who test positive for and even succumb to the virus contribute to our feelings of anxiety and panic. It is therefore important to look after our mental as well as our physical health in this challenging time.

Reasons why people feel anxious

- They are uncertain about what the future holds
- They fear getting infected or losing a loved one
- They worry about the impact of the lockdown on their finances, family and work
- They have “cabin fever” because their movement is restricted

It helps to talk to friends and family about your anxieties. Write down all your concerns and list possible solutions for each.

Living with an existing mental health condition

If you are living with a mental health condition it is vital to monitor your emotions and reactions to your surroundings closely. Also make sure to follow your treatment regimen.

Should you feel unable to control your feelings of anxiety or depression, contact your treating doctor for advice.

If you are currently receiving therapy, continue your sessions with your treating therapist or doctor online. Ask your therapist to work out a treatment plan to follow during this time.

Avoid using “crutches” such as cigarettes or other substances to deal with stress. Rather speak to a family member, friend, therapist or doctor, or phone the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG).

Things you can do to help reduce anxiety

- 1 Follow the guidelines and regulations issued by Government.
- 2 Connect with others by phone or online.
- 3 Stick to a healthy routine.
- 4 Do something good for others – from a distance.
- 5 Stay informed, but filter what you read.
- 6 Focus on positive news such as the high number of recoveries.
- 7 Focus on the things you can control.
- 8 Practise relaxing techniques such as breathing exercises or yoga.
- 9 Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- 10 Get enough sleep.

Find support to deal with anxiety

Talk to your friends and family about your feelings, or phone **SADAG**:

- **0800 21 22 23 / 0800 70 80 90 / 0800 456 789**
- Suicide Helpline – **0800 567 567**
- SMS **31393** or **32312** and a counsellor will phone you back

You can also access SADAG’s online chat, which is available through the **Cipla WhatsApp Chat Line** at **076 882 2775**.



Medihelp benefits

To accommodate members who are unable to visit a general practitioner or specialist during this time, Medihelp will provide benefits for telephonic/video consultations (item code 0130) at 100% of the scheme tariff, subject to members’ available day-to-day benefits.