

On Lockdown, not Knockdown: Protecting your mental health during the coronavirus pandemic

#WellbeingWarriors

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Quote by Lori Deschene: “Just breathe. You are strong enough to handle your challenges, wise enough to find a solution to your problems, and capable enough to do whatever needs to be done.”

For many students, the uncertainty and the changes brought on by the Coronavirus pandemic can be an additional stressor that triggers anxiety and adjustment difficulties. Many students may be overwhelmed with the prospects of balancing their physical and personal wellbeing, social life, academics and finances: all of which contribute to their mental health and all of which may be disrupted by the Coronavirus pandemic. The American Psychological Association (APA) suggests keeping things in perspective, and are quoted as saying:

“Take a deep breath and remind yourself that most people who contract COVID-19 will only experience mild symptoms. Work is being done to help people who may be more vulnerable to the coronavirus, such as senior citizens and those with underlying health conditions. As coverage increases, it's important to take the necessary precautions to keep your family and loved ones healthy”.

It is equally important to take a holistic approach to your wellness in order to protect your mental health.

PHYSICAL WELLBEING

During your time at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle.

- Keep fit by exercising.
- Maintain a proper diet, including taking time to cook healthy meals.
- Get enough sleep.
- If you are on any medication, for perhaps a mental illness, please adhere to your regimen.

Quote by Carley Schweet: “Creating a healthy mindset is an investment in your overall wellbeing.”

[For some more ways of creating a healthy mindset, click here](#)

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

- Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions as this can maintain your anxiety.
- Spend time meditating and exercising mindfulness ([being present](#)).
- Journal or take up an absorbing hobby, e.g. music, reading, and writing.
- Find purpose, motivation, and meaning from your philosophical beliefs.
- Tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty: evaluate what is within your control and take any necessary action. For whatever is outside of your control, exercise acceptance.
- Self-care: Do daily check ins of your mood and thoughts. Practice positive affirmations daily.

SPIRITUAL WELLBEING

- Take time for what gives you meaning and replenishes you.

SOCIAL WELLBEING

- Stay connected: effectively utilize technology to connect with friends and loved ones.
- Spend time with those who are at home with you.
- Have fun, relax and do the things you enjoy.

FINANCIAL WELLBEING

- Do not panic buy, only buy essential items that you need.
- Simply budget and set financial goals.
- Explore [free online budgeting tools](#).

ACADEMIC WELLBEING

- Reflect on 2019 and set your goals for 2020.
- Stay informed and feel free to ask for help.
- Catch up on any work missed this past quarter and start preparing for what is next.
- Try to maintain a routine that is similar to the one that you will need to follow when you return to varsity, this includes sleeping at the same time every night.
- [Manage your time effectively](#).

Overall, take this time to show a commitment to improving your mental health by applying the tips outlined above. Remember to be kind to yourself, accept that you cannot control everything and know that you are doing your best given the circumstances.