

# IDENTIFYING YOUR STRESS SIGNALS



During the last couple of months, many people are viewing a constant barrage of disturbing news and experiencing emotional, physical and mental fatigue while sheltering in place and practicing social distancing. While this is hopefully getting better in different areas of the country, many of us are still facing demanding and exhausting work schedules.

Now more than ever, our mental health should be a top priority. Recognizing stress in ourselves and knowing how to manage it is particularly important today because chronic stress threatens our wellbeing and weakens the immune system's ability to fight off infections.



## INFLUENCING YOUR STATE OF MIND

Although we are now in the digital age where technology allows us to stay connected, we still desire human interaction, involving touch and in-person gatherings to keep us mentally healthy. It's not surprising many of us are experiencing anxiety, depression and other mind health problems; there are ways to cope with stress that will help you and those around you better manage such feelings and reduce worries.

Everyone reacts to stress differently, so it's important to remember what works for one person may not work for another. Here are some coping tips that can help you manage your stress levels moving forward:

- **Identify stress cues.** Teeth grinding, weight gain, headaches, mood swings, back and neck pain and sleepless nights are signals you are experiencing stress. Identifying these cues will help you know when it's time to practice some strategies to lower your stress.
- **Know your triggers.** If you're working from home or watching the news and you find yourself feeling anxious, irritated or experiencing a headache or neck pain, that's the time to get up and disconnect. Taking a walk, listening to music or finding a quiet place to relax can help you reset your mental state and go back to tackling the day's tasks.
- **Disconnect daily.** Schedule regular times throughout the day when you take breaks from working or watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Being connected 24-hours a day can lead to mental strain and anxiety. Take time to unwind by participating in activities that break up the monotony of your day. Connecting with people you trust to talk about your feelings can also help improve your mood.



- **Find your creative outlet.** Spend time reconnecting with pastimes you enjoy or find a new activity or hobby.
- **Breathe for relaxation.** There's no time like the present to start working on your breathing, reducing your anxiety levels and promoting a state of calmness.
- **Move your body.** Keep active.
- **Stay connected.** Keeping in touch with your family and friends is critical. Reach out to people who are important to you using social media, videoconferencing or phone calls.
- **It's important to remember stress is common, reduces productivity and threatens physical and mental well-being.** Being informed and developing stress coping techniques will help you manage and come out stronger in the end.



# NAOHP

Progressing with the ongoing changes, NAOHP remains the core development of occupational health, providing occupational health professionals and providers the education, training, and tools necessary to have a successful occupational health program.

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