

COVID-19: Calming Your Mind in Challenging Times

Presenter: Lakshmi Sundaram

Date: March 11, 2021



EFAP Information

English: 1.800.663.1142
French: 1.866.398.9505
TTY: 1.888.384.1152
Online: www.homewoodhealth.com

Confidential Counselling Available 24/7



Agenda

- COVID-19
- Are you stressed?
- What are your triggers?
- What are your current coping strategies and how do you recharge?
- Barriers in using coping strategies
- Mini-break options
- Commitment
- Reminders
- Helpful tools





Learning Objectives

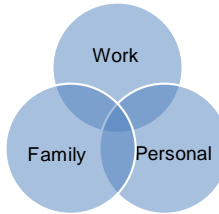
- Realize the benefits of taking more breaks in our days
- Discover tools and mini-break options that are right for you and can assist with the ease of making brief relaxation moments a part of your daily routine
- Overcome barriers to taking mini-breaks
- Commit to taking mini-breaks
- Remind ourselves to take mini-breaks



COVID-19

Possible changes and disruptions due to COVID-19:

- Increased/decreased workload and/or new responsibilities
- Worry over the well-being of family and friends
- Worry over your own well-being
- Social isolation
- Absence or limits to recreation/hobby activities (missed vacations, closed movie theatres)
- Childcare issues
- Financial hardship
- Job insecurity





COVID-19 (continued)

Gratitude?

- My job is flexible enough that I can work from home
- My friends and loved ones are currently well
- I am healthy
- Everyday I am seeing/hearing about acts of kindness
- My workload has decreased and I am able to work on some interesting side projects now
- Spending more time with family





An Astronaut's Guide to Self-Isolation



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4U_5qz5Uk8

© HomeWood Health™ Confidential & Proprietary



Are you stressed?



- yes
- no
- maybe

© HomeWood Health™ Confidential & Proprietary
8



What are your triggers?

Example:

Time	Situation	Feelings	Negative Responses
8:25	Check news	Worried that ...	Shouted at spouse
9:45	Computer crashes	Frustrated that can't get on with work	Complain to everyone at work about computer system
12:30	Unpleasant phone call from irate customer	Upset, angry. Not my fault	Had a glass of wine with lunch and moaned to colleagues
18:00	Shopping in crowded grocery store	Frustrated, irritable, angry	Went home without several items. Bought comfort snacks

© HomeWood Health™ Confidential & Proprietary
9



Your coping strategies

- What might be some ways to cope better with not only our everyday stressors, but with the stressors that accompany the current COVID-19 outbreak?
- What coping strategies do you use to recharge and reset?



© Homewood Health™ Confidential & Proprietary
10



Common barriers

- No time to spare
- I feel guilty because I should be doing x,y,z instead
- Stuck at home
- No privacy
- Always on my feet
- I can't sit still
- Heightened fight-flight response due to pandemic



© Homewood Health™ Confidential & Proprietary
11



What is a mini-break?

- "Short break in your day when you recharge your internal batteries"
- "It is whenever you give yourself permission to step out of your full-speed life and shift into neutral for a little while"



© Homewood Health™ Confidential & Proprietary
12



Benefits of mini-breaks

What are some of the benefits of making mini-breaks part of your days?



Increases

- Ability to focus
- Energy
- Sleep quality
- Happiness
- Creativity
- Life satisfaction



Decreases

- Fatigue
- Risk of injury
- Risk of burnout
- Negative mood
- Stress



Mini-breaks - in the morning

- Morning meditation
- Shower refresher
- Morning walk
- Stretching
- Playing with kids or pets





Mini-Breaks – at your workstation

- Walk around the block
- Watch a funny video clip
- Take a tea/coffee break in another room
- Rub lotion into your hands





Mini-Breaks - over lunch or break times

- Eat a meal in gratitude
- Shop online
- Power nap
- Read





Mini-breaks - in the evening

- Gratitude journal
- Soothing bath/sauna/steam
- Read a book/magazine
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Watch comedy or uplifting tv





Progressive muscle relaxation

- Step 1: Tension
- Step 2: Relaxing the tense muscles





Mini-breaks - w ith kids

- Bedtime story
- Family meal
- Family dance party
- Blow bubbles
- Build a fort
- Singing





Mini-breaks - for couples



- Hug
- Partner gratitude journal
- Dedicated time together
- Hold hands
- Laugh
- Unplug



My commitment to Mini-Breaks

My Commitment to Mini-Retreats

I DESERVE TO RELAX AND RECHARGE!

WITH MY COMMITMENT TO HAVING MINI-RETREATS, I SAY YES TO:

HEALTH
PACER
REFLECTIVE TIME
PUTTING MYSELF FIRST
TENDING
PEACE

I MAKE MY COMMITMENT TO MINI-RETREATS WITH:

From @green.heart.college, for each support and/or health/peace and/or parent

Signature: _____ Date: _____

THIS WEEK'S MINI-RETREATS:

When: _____	Where: _____
When: _____	Where: _____
When: _____	Where: _____
When: _____	Where: _____

Put your name here and make it yours by committing to take your breaks, and plan them for the week! Please use the space below to write your notes, or any other ideas after you complete the above commitment statement.



Reminders

- Learn to recognize your own signs of stress and fatigue . . . what are you going to do when you recognize your signs?
- Visual reminders using Post-it notes
- Book an appointment with yourself
- Talk about mini-breaks
- Notice and create supportive places in your environment
- Relaxation affirmations



In summary . . .

- Recognize when you are exhibiting signs of stress
- Take action to decrease the key stressors in your life that you have some control over
- Practice regularly the de-stressing techniques that work best for you





Helpful tools

Meditation

- **Meditation Oasis App**
 - Guided meditations, instructions for meditation, and music for meditation
 - www.meditationoasis.com
- *Mindfulness for Beginners* by Jon Kabat-Zinn



EFAP Information

English: 1.800.663.1142
French: 1.866.398.9505
TTY: 1.888.384.1152
Online: www.homewoodhealth.com

Confidential Counselling Available 24/7

© Homewood Health™ Confidential & Proprietary



Homewood
Health | Santé

© Homewood Health™ Confidential & Proprietary

26
