



# THE EAP CONNECTION

## Dealing with Uncertainty During COVID-19

For many, uncertainty around the pandemic is difficult to handle. Our communities, workplaces, and families are all being affected. With so much uncertainty and change, how do you cope with the challenges that accompany this situation? Many of us have had to adjust to new routines, whether working remotely from home, navigating a job loss, educating school-aged kids, or caring for loved ones during this pandemic. The following tips can help you deal with this unique crisis. If you are still struggling, consider contacting ERC for your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

**Take care of your body and your spirit.** Get plenty of sleep, maintain a good diet, and exercise. These are important basics that keep your body functioning at its best. It's also beneficial to refrain from alcohol consumption and decrease your caffeine intake.

**Stay informed but limit your news intake.** New information emerges every time we pick up our phones or turn on the TV. It's good to have accurate info to handle the pandemic, but all that news coverage can negatively impact your mental state and make it tough to cope. Limit your updates and be discerning about your news sources.

**Take time for leisure activities.** Taking time for enjoyment and leisure are great escapes to reduce your tension levels and add fun to your day. Go for a walk, read a book, connect virtually with friends, do a hobby, or learn something new. The key part is having time for yourself and taking your mind off your worries.

**Spend time with family and friends.** Although we are social distancing, connection with family and friends can help you maintain a healthy emotional balance and reduce your stress. It's our human nature to seek out relationships with others, so find creative ways to virtually interact, like through social media, video chatting, playing video games, or joining group conversations online. Family and friends can offer support and encouragement to help you stay grounded during this challenging time.

**Maintain a positive attitude.** Negative feelings are normal in difficult situations. Use positive self-talk to remind yourself that you can overcome challenges. Determine what is within your control and what isn't. Focus on the things that you can do in this situation. Think about the positive ways you, your workplace, and your community are responding to the coronavirus and taking measures to protect and support people.

**Practice mindfulness.** If you feel yourself spiraling into negativity or panic, grounding yourself in the present moment can stop the negativity and allow your rational brain time to respond. This technique is simple yet effective. Bring your attention to your breath and body. Focus on the here and now, noticing the sights, sounds, and smells around you as well as what you're feeling in your body. Continue to slowly breathe in and out, gently bringing your mind back to your body and breath when it drifts, until you feel calmer.

**Plan for what you can.** Change involves a lot of uncertainty; however, when you can, make a plan for the things that are within your control. Focus on solutions and concrete responses rather than letting your mind run wild with *what ifs* and uncertainties. Planning can help you prepare to weather the storm as best you can.

**Stay focused and productive.** It's healthy to keep a routine and manage daily activities, even during times of change or uncertainty. Getting up and going to bed at the same time as before creates structure for you and your family, especially if you have children. Establish a daily schedule for working from home, schooling for your children, or other activities that need to get done. Engaging in day-to-day responsibilities can distract from stress and worry about things beyond your control.

**Be open about potential challenges.** Don't suppress feelings, rather be honest about your fears and challenges. With all the changes happening quickly, many of us are trying our best to adapt to new situations. If you are having difficulty at home or work, communicate your feelings along with positive solutions to those that are involved. Starting an open conversation may help you clarify details, understand others' perspectives, or give you insight on things you may not have realized. This is a challenging time for everyone, so have patience with those around you as we all work to navigate the new normal.

Remember, we are all in this together.

### HOW TO USE YOUR EAP BENEFIT:

ERC: Counselors & Consultants is your company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider. For additional information, visit our website [ERCincorp.com](http://ERCincorp.com) or call 1-800-222-8590.