

Thankfully, it isn't often that we hear about virus outbreaks on a global scale. However, with all the talk lately about the Coronavirus (COVID-19), many of us are finding ourselves increasingly stressed and worried—about our health, the economy, or everyday activities that we generally wouldn't think twice about.

But remember—this isn't the first time in recent history that we've faced uncertain situations. Dr. Russ Morfitt, co-founder and Chief Psychology Officer at Learn to Live, encourages us to ask ourselves an important question: In the face of a challenging situation such as the COVID-19, *how can we be resilient?* In other words, how can we adjust for the difficult conditions without putting our lives on hold? Here are a few suggestions for how we can handle the stress that may bubble up.

- **Listen to reliable sources.** While the buzz of the media may be interesting, it's not always our greatest source of truth. When we seek advice primarily from medical professionals and organizations such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC), we are more likely to gather reliable facts and tips for staying healthy without raising fear in an unhelpful way.
- **Make your choices and make the best of things.** Once you have chosen your personal level of precautions, it's time to settle in and do life. Choose to make the best of things and accept that there is uncertainty in all times.
- **Resist predicting the future.** "One thing that never changes is that we can't predict the future with full accuracy, and we all have to live with uncertainty at times," explains Dr. Russ. After you've taken the precautions you've chosen, try challenging "fortune-telling" thoughts by asking, "Do I know for sure that _____ is true?" And consider, "What other outcomes could occur?" Other possibilities might be just as likely, but we might not consider them unless we nudge ourselves to do so.
- **Acknowledge the worries,** but don't let them overtake you. It can be hard to accomplish our greater life goals when we're constantly distracted by worry.
 - Step One: Recognize the fearful or anxious thoughts and feelings.
 - Step Two: Allow the fear and anxiety to come and go without seeking to change or even act on those thoughts and feelings.
 - Step Three: Revisit your worries later when you can address them. Try talking to a friend, journaling about your concerns, or even creating an action plan.
- **Keep doing rewarding activities.** "In times of high anxiety, we're more likely to *avoid* doing things that would otherwise boost our mood." Dr. Russ points out, "While resilient people do take reasonable precautions, they also accept risks that are out of their control and engage actively in the world as much as they can."

No one wants to get sick or face the challenge of recovery—with COVID-19 or any other illness. Yet worrying about the unknown may not be helpful either. By giving these strategies a try, we hope it helps you find more peace, and maybe even growth, in a time of such uncertainty.

We can help.

Our Depression and Stress, Anxiety and Worry programs have helped individuals find freedom from anxiety, fear and discouragement and refresh their lives. Learn to Live offers support for you and your family members (13 and older) as a no-cost benefit through your employer.

Visit learntolive.com/partners and use the code **STOLAF** to get started. If you're already a member, simply sign-in with your username and password.