

PAUSE. THIS IS AN INCREDIBLY CHALLENGING TIME. YOU'RE DOING THE BEST YOU CAN.

We're in the midst of a **disaster response marathon**. It is expected that we will **move through this in phases** – initially running off adrenaline, proceeding to become irritable with others, having bouts of anxiety and difficulty sleeping. This is normal, and **you will need to take breaks and pause**. A sprinter's pace is just not sustainable, and breaks also allow for an additional opportunity to **wash your hands**.

BREATHE. INHALE FOR 5, HOLD FOR 3, EXHALE FOR 5.

Slowing down your breath is incredibly effective at lowering your heart rate and calming your nervous system. **Pause and inhale through your nose while counting to 5**, and notice your stomach rise. **Hold your breath, while counting to 3. Exhale through your mouth, counting to 5 again.** Repeat as many times as necessary.

FIND A WORK BUDDY, AND CHECK-IN DAILY.

Identify someone at work who is facing similar work and/or home challenges, and **check-in daily**. While social distancing is imperative to slowing this pandemic, connection to others is key to our mental health. **The check-in can be short** – just a reminder that you're not alone.

EXERCISE DAILY, EVEN IF JUST FOR A FEW MINUTES.

Exercise is key to mental and physical health. If you're feeling pressed for time and wondering how to possibly fit in exercise, consider a **10-min walk** while you check-in with your work buddy, or taking work calls/virtual meetings while walking or **stretching at your desk**.

PRACTICE HEALTHY SLEEPING HABITS, AS BEST AS YOU CAN GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

Getting good sleep can be **easier said than done**, especially when anxious, stressed, and/or depressed. When possible, **try to make your bedroom a stress-free zone**. Avoid using your phone, computer, or TV to read/watch stressful information while in bed. This will help **preserve your bed as a peaceful place** for rest and relaxation.

PRACTICE HEALTHY EATING HABITS, AS BEST AS YOU CAN GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

Keeping a **regular eating schedule** can help curb snack cravings. Be mindful of how hungry you are prior to eating. Make/choose meals and snacks with a **variety of nutrient-rich foods** such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and dairy foods. **Stay hydrated** by drinking water, limit sugary and caffeinated beverages. **Wash hands** prior to preparing food.

COMMUNICATE YOUR CONCERNS AND NEEDS.

Communicate your concerns and what you need – for your work, mental and physical health, home life, etc. While your current needs may be largely practical – flexible working arrangements, leave questions, access to PPE - **remember your psychological needs too**.

LOOK INTO VARIOUS APPS, FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND SOCIAL CONNECTION.

Consider looking into **various apps that might be helpful** at this time – apps that support meditation, breathing, staying organized, acupressure, sleep hygiene, exercise routines, etc. And of course, **stay virtually connected to your friends and family**.

BE KIND TO OTHERS, AND YOURSELF. THESE ARE TRYING TIMES FOR EVERYONE.

These are **incredibly trying times** – at work, at home, in our relationships, in our communities. Decisions will be made that you may disagree with. You may feel a **sense of loss**, as routines are severely interrupted and celebrations/gatherings are cancelled. **Kindness towards yourself, and others, is key** to maintaining our collective health.