

## **Coping with Uncertainty, Worry and Fear**

Everyone is saying “2020 is a year like no other!” The COVID-19 virus is still lingering and may continue to do so for some time. We may be asking, “What if I get it? What if my parents do? What about Grandma and Grandpa?” “Is it safe to go back to work, or school?” Layered on top of COVID concerns, we have ongoing racial issues, social unrest, rioting, and more to be concerned about. “What will that mean to me and my future?” In addition to these large global concerns that, each of us have our own personal stressors: social isolation, family matters, childcare, elderly loved ones, financial worries, schoolwork, and more. *“Stop...I can’t take any more uncertainty!”*

### **How this may manifest in the individual (adults or older children and teens):**

- Ongoing negative or fearful thoughts
- Pessimism about the future
- Increased anxiety or depression
- Self-medicating with drugs or alcohol
- Over-eating
- Isolation, depression, suicidality
- Exacerbation of existing issues, relapse
- Sleep disturbances
- Acting out

### **Younger children may not have the ability to verbalize their feelings, so you may notice some of the previously noted issues, in addition to the following:**

- Physical symptoms (headache or stomach-ache)
- Behavior changes (irritability, aggression, lying, nail-biting)
- Regression to earlier behaviors (bed-wetting, thumb-sucking)

***To help your children, help yourself first.***

**Our children look to parents and other adults (teachers, coaches, clergy, counselors, etc.) for normalcy, security and safety.**

**Things you can do to help:**

- Limit exposure to media (social, TV, news, etc.)
- Talk to our kids realistically, but assure them
- Spirituality (pray, meditate, practice mindfulness)
- Get proper rest and nutrition
- Seek out real human contact (where safe to do so)
- Do something fun
- Talk about other challenges we as a nation and you personally have successfully navigated.
- Remind yourself, and them, that “this too shall pass”
- Get support (SFAP is a great place to start)

**Check out**



**Apps:**

<https://www.helpguide.org/home-pages/audio-meditations.htm> (this site offers 9 different meditations, one being “coping with uncertainty”)

<https://insighttimer.com/> Great free app for stress, anxiety, sleep, etc. Has a huge library of meditations.

**Articles:**

<https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/>

**Advocate Aurora Student & Family Assistance Program**

**800-236-3231**