

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.

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 distancing is imperative to slowing this pandemic, social connection is key to our mental health. **The check-in doesn't have to be long** – 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.