

Greetings 173 FW Family,

We know that recently, many have been experiencing increased stress due to the world wide impacts of coronavirus. With the increase in conversations surrounding staying healthy, increased news coverage, impacts on travel and other activities- it can often be difficult to focus on anything else.

While we all want to be careful and stay abreast of what's going on in the world, sometimes too much information flow can be overwhelming and cause negative impacts to our mental wellness. We would encourage each of you to make a conscious effort to practice self-care. Be kind. Encourage and support each other. Stay mindful that many are at least a bit worried, trying to process, and still trying to manage daily life with as much normality as possible which can prove to be very difficult at times.

Your Resiliency Team just wanted to take a moment to offer some information on signs or symptoms to look for and coping strategies to managing some of that anxiety and stress.

1. A very common symptom of heightened stress and anxiousness is often change in sleep pattern. Are you sleeping too much, or not enough?

If you're finding yourself unable to shut down your thoughts to get a good night's rest (racing thoughts), or having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep in general, it's time to start being proactive about setting an environment/routine that invites restfulness. Sometimes this means shutting off the television a little earlier and playing some relaxing music, sometimes it means listening to soothing sounds before sleep. While these are just suggestions, there are a variety of things you can do to aid in better sleep.

2. Another common symptom that many experience is an increase in negative thoughts or worry.

Sometimes it can be difficult to stop thinking about something that impacts or could impact your life so greatly. In those instances, we again need to be proactive. It can seem nearly impossible to separate ourselves from what's going on around us. But, sometimes we ALL need a little down time. It's ok to step away from the cell phone or the news station to have a normal dinner with the family or get out in nature. Sometimes we need to create some normalcy in our lives to help us stay grounded in times of crisis. This is especially important if you have children. Often our children mirror our behaviors and coping strategies.

3. Feelings of overwhelm and inability to focus are also common.

When crisis happens, sometimes we find ourselves unable to complete tasks, unable to focus on things and activities that are otherwise normally simple for us. Sometimes we become overwhelmed and don't know where to start. It's sometimes very easy to become consumed with our fears or concerns. In these cases, it helps us to become proactive about challenging negative thought patterns. There are many ways to create positive changes that can take us out of this pattern of thinking.

4. Look for creative ways meet your social needs.

If you are worried or concerned, there is a good chance that someone you know may be as well. With social distancing now the norm, we can feel disconnected from the very people who give us strength. This is an opportunity to get those creative juices going. Use technology to your advantage using FaceTime, voice calls, or whatever current technology allows to make those key human-to-human connections. Reach out to your friends and neighbors and ask them

how they are doing; you may be practicing self-care in a manner which also benefits someone else.

While this list is by no means exhaustive, many people experience these and similar signs or symptoms with increased stress and anxiety. Please make sure you're checking in with yourself, staying cognizant of your physical and emotional needs, practicing good self-care, and above all, taking the necessary precautions to remain safe and healthy.

I'm including a link to the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>), which provides information on managing stress and anxiety during a health crisis as well as tips on how to talk to your children regarding the recent health crisis.

If you need support in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out. If you need help finding coping strategies that work for you, please let us know.

Director of Psychological Health – **For Scheduling** please email: usaf.or.173-fw.mbx.dph@mail.mil or call 541-880-2479

Jen Green 541-855-6433,
Mariana Peoples 541-885-6644,

Chaplain - Kraig Kroeker - 541-885-6239,

Airman & Family Readiness – Cecily Gaudinski 541-885-6112

Again, please don't hesitate to contact us for any reason.

Be well.