



Practice 2: Recognizing our Emotions in Times of Crisis



The fact is that.... in little more than a month everything that glued our sense of normalcy (routines, work, family life, meetings with friends, life in community) has been radically altered due to the impact that the effects of the coronavirus outbreak has had in our personal lives. Though this pandemic initially seemed very far away from the European and American continents, somehow its inevitability created a sense of dread and menace from afar. Thus, it can be argued that we were exposed to “coronavirus stress” way before the actual virus landed here!



Did you know that... our brain, through a tiny organ called amygdala (which is the region in charge of recognizing and experiencing emotions) is constantly scanning our environment in order to identify potential threats and risks, especially those who are new in our environment? This coronavirus naturally creates more fear and anxiety than other well known and old threats (such as influenza, for example) and this is why, we are all experiencing higher levels of anxiety in the face of COVID-19, which is ultimately, a natural human survival response.

Prepared by Dr. Jessica Price:
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Practice 2: Recognizing emotions....



What can we do? consider the following strategies:

- ✓ Recognize when you need to ask for help and reach out to your support system (friends, family, health specialists) whenever necessary (particularly if you are feeling anxious, stressed, worried) recognizing that at other moments, you may be the one that will provide support.
- ✓ Try to develop a form of “emotional literacy”, by identifying your emotions (recognizing and labeling them as sadness, anxiety, frustration, anger, whatever they might be) and trying to identify the level of the emotion itself (is it intense or not so much?) and seeking to go deeper into your exploration: if these emotions could talk, what would they say? If you could answer in order to handle them better, what would you reply back?
- ✓ How could you bring these emotions back to a less distressing level? Here is an idea: take time to close your eyes and ask yourself: from which part of my body is this emotion coming? Zoom into this region of your body, and try to image a wave of relaxation gradually going through all your body and stopping at this particular point, taking all the needed time to bring relaxation to where the emotion is located.
- ✓ Repeat this exercise whenever you need to understand and manage your emotions better, which will allow you to be present, not only for your own needs, but for the needs of others as well.

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