

Psychological impact of the corona virus



Recommendations

The developments regarding the coronavirus and the preventive measures to prevent its spread have a strong impact on our daily lives. Next, we give some recommendations that can support you in dealing with its psychological impact.

1. Go for safety & stay well informed

Choose the sources of information you can trust: follow the communication of RIVM and NOC*NSF. They will always provide you with filtered, nuanced, factual and practical information to help you understand what is happening, how to cope and who to turn to for more information and support.

- **Follow the news in a well-chosen manner** (2 to 3 times a day and while keeping an eye out for extra news items). Do not be tempted to continuously want to know everything about the current situation. It can come across as overwhelming or even alarming and lead to a feeling of helplessness.
- Situate new facts by asking yourself **“What do they mean for me and my entourage?”**

2. Coach your thoughts & keep calm

- A certain amount of confusion, anxiety and procrastination are not strange. Make sure not to be swayed by them by **actively controlling your thoughts**.
- **Accept and take into your hands:** do not let you become too upset or have your daily functioning completely disrupted. **Accept** that you cannot always keep control of the situation and **take** specific measures to deal with the problems in order to keep your daily life as organized and structured as possible.



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- **Dealing with negative thoughts and feelings:** Accept that occasionally you can experience negative thoughts and feelings. Do not let them take center stage in your daily life by avoiding paying constantly attention to them. Try to shift your attention by focusing on a word, thought, or behavior that actively supports you in relaxing, letting go, and maintaining your daily life.
- **Do the 456:** Since our thoughts and feelings have a strong impact on our body, you can do 4 x the 56 exercise to relax or shift your focus: breathe in for **5 counts** and breathe out for **6 counts** while slowly lowering your shoulders (as if a heavy coat falls off your shoulders). Do this **4 times** a day as well as when you feel that your tension or unrest will increase.

3. Normalize “the new” & make the measures your daily behavior

To be consistent with the measures aimed at preventing the spread of the coronavirus you will have to adjust your daily behavior.

- Make a plan to **convert measures** such as keeping social distance, not shaking and washing your hands regularly into your daily routine. You can visualise how you will feel and how you will behave. This will help you to keep up your daily activities and deal with the feeling that something may be missing or that your behavior would appear rude or unfriendly.

4. Keep your eye on the horizon & set (new) goals

Due to the Corona measures, certain activities in your program will no longer take place meaning your daily routine and goals must be adjusted.

- **Discuss** with your coach and entourage how to maintain your daily routine with a focus on your own concrete (new) goals.
- Due to their postponement or cancellation, it is not always clear what or when competitions will happen. However, **make sure you stay prepared** and therefore discuss with your coach and entourage what you will do in order to continue with your daily (training) activities. So set yourself realistic and achievable goals!
- **Keep coaching yourself** to keep your thoughts and feelings as supportive as possible.



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5. Find each other online, together we are strong!

The measures taken have as consequence that a strong reduction in your direct contact with your entourage and other people who are important to you. It takes some getting used to, but fortunately we can keep in touch digitally.

- **Do not isolate yourself** but go digital to chat, to share thoughts and feelings and to exchange examples of alternative daily activities.
- As your body language and that of the other people is not always visible online, you will have to **articulate some messages more clearly and extensively**.

6. A question or in need for support? Get in touch!

This situation can make you feel insecure, restless, or irritable. Sometimes this can also lead to a feeling of lack of control, avoidance behavior, disturbed sleep, anxiety or even panic.

- For advice on how to deal with the psychological impact of this situation, contact our **network of TeamNL experts performance behavior**. Mail our expert Paul Wylleman and submit your question, your concern or request for support. Together with his team, he will answer your questions as quickly as possible and, if necessary, put you in digital contact with one of our TeamNL experts performance behavior. Stay also in contact with your team doctor.



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