



PSYCHOLOGICAL TOOLKIT : QUICK TIPS

MANAGING SITUATIONAL ANXIETY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

When faced with threat or uncertainty, anxiety and worry are normal reactions.

We can't eliminate these reactions completely, but we can learn to tolerate temporary distress by **focusing our attention on what we can control and what we can change.**

Focus your attention on **CONTROLLABLE FACTORS** by doing the following:

- Follow HSE guidelines
- Practice your own social distancing
- Check your thinking and modify your behaviour (i.e. by being optimistically vigilant, NOT panicking or under-responding)
- Limit your social media usage (i.e. only checking a reputable news source once or twice per day)
- Ignore fear-mongering (i.e. through forwarded text messages or posts on social media platforms).
- Identify coping mechanisms to help you deal with **frustration, irritability, worry, and potential boredom.**

Try to take your attention away from **UNCONTROLLABLE FACTORS**, such as:

- How other people react
- The level to which other people practice social distancing and follow HSE guidelines

COPING MECHANISMS*

ROUTINE: Develop a routine – we are experiencing a degree of social and occupational restriction at present. Routines give us reassurance and a sense of predictability in the world when we need it.

SLEEP: Prolonged isolation or social restriction may lead to our sleep-waking cycle being disrupted. Try to get up and go to bed at your usual time.

TRAINING AND DIET: Exercise, eating well, and avoiding excessive alcohol and caffeine use will be important in regulating your mood and anxiety levels during this period.

SOCIAL: Try to maintain connectedness during social isolation. Use technology to your advantage here (Skype, Google Hangouts etc.). This will not replace face-to-face connection, but it will enable some semblance of social connectedness and reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

LINK IN WITH APPROPRIATE SERVICES (DF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY, PSS, INSPIRE) WHEN ANXIETY OR DISTRESS BECOMES DEBILITATING OR INTOLERABLE.

(Adapted from "COVID 19 Psychological Survival Guide", Mark Smith, President, Psychological Society of Ireland)

