



Managing Stress, Anxiety and Wellbeing During the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic

It is okay to not be okay: Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to increasing anxiety, stress and fears of uncertainty. It is normal to feel like this. In these difficult times, you should make sure to be in tune with your emotions and mental well-being. If you are feeling overwhelmed, remember to turn to Allah.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "If anyone constantly seeks pardon (from Allah), Allah will appoint for him a way out of every distress and a relief from every anxiety, and will provide sustenance for him from where he expects not." [Abu Dawud].

Stress can manifest in different ways¹:

- Racing heart, feeling tense and anxious
- Feelings of sadness, increased irritability, feeling overwhelmed
- Changes in sleeping patterns and habits
- Loss of appetite or change in eating habits.
- Difficulty concentrating, lack of interest

Tips on Limiting Stress:

- **Limit your consumption of media.** It seems like every media outlet is reporting on the pandemic, however try to limit your time watching and following the news. Try to focus on credible sources of information from the NHS² or government³.
- **Keep to a routine.** Waking up at the same time will help you feel less tired and more refreshed, allowing you to concentrate better through the day. Get ready as you would normally, showered, dressed and ready for the day. Routine helps lessen anxiety.
- **Maintain a healthy diet & stay hydrated.** Be inspired by the Prophet's (sallahu alayhi wa salam's) favourite foods: dates, turnip, olives, black seed & honey. Don't overeat & drink plenty of fluids, ZamZam If available.
 - The Prophet SAW said, "Use the Black Seed for indeed, it is a cure for all diseases except death." [Bukhari]
 - "Honey is a remedy for every illness and the Quran is a remedy for all illness of the mind, therefore I recommend to you both remedies, the Quran and honey." [Sahih Bukhari]
- **Engage in mindfulness⁴.** You should spend time engaged in meditation/muraqabah (spend some time clearing your mind, reflecting on Allah and sitting in a quiet place), engage in frequent

¹ <http://anxietycare.org.uk/anxiety/>

² <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

⁴ <http://www.freemindfulness.org/>

dhikr and Qur'an recitation. Designate a calm and tranquil place in your home where you engage in these activities. Make sure you disconnect from your phone at this time and try to establish a daily routine incorporating mindfulness into your day alongside prayer.

- **Make time to do things you enjoy.** We all have things we enjoy doing and it's important to put aside time to do these. As we need to spend more time at home, why not try things you always put off because you didn't have the time.
 - If you have children set aside some time to talk to them and keep them busy with fun activities or hobbies which may keep you occupied as well.

If you are "Self Isolating"

- **You don't have to be isolated when in isolation.** Reach out to friends & family and create those human connections. Loneliness can cause increased anxiety.
 - Try video calls instead of emails, phone calls instead of messages. Why not have a virtual catch up over coffee!
 - Remember to check in and call the most vulnerable and the elderly.
- **Separate spaces.** Keep an appointed space for work, a space for sleeping, and a space for relaxation & ibadah, even if they all end up needing to be in the same room. This will help you focus and be more productive.
- **Fresh air & sunshine.** Go out for a walk in your garden if you have one. If you don't then open your windows and let the daylight in. Reflect on the beauty of Allah's creation all around you.
- **Exercise.** Keeping healthy is not only a Sunnah but also triggers feelings of positivity. Try some simple exercises at home, using online videos if needed. Try jogging in one place, a skipping rope, push-ups, lunges and sit-ups. Yoga can be a very relaxing and beneficial exercise.

How to relieve symptoms of anxiety and stress

- **Be aware of your stress levels.** Recognising the symptoms of stress & anxiety early makes them easier to manage. Identify the triggers that cause you to feel stressed.
- **Breathe.** Focus on your breathing. Focus on the natural rhythm. Focus only on this
- **Listening to the Quran⁵.** Try listening to the Quran, this can be very relaxing, there are many Qari to choose from. You could even try to copy them, taking an ayah at a time, to improve your recitation.
- **Notice the good around you.** It can sometimes be difficult when there is so much stress and uncertainty around you. Find something good around you, think about it and squeeze the goodness out of it. Keep a look out for all that is good.
- **Take a step back.** Try to remove yourself from the current stressors and look at life as a bigger picture: what has been good? What have you achieved? Who are the positive people around you? What are you grateful for?
- **Write** down what is worrying you. Problems can be easier to manage when written down
- **Create a 'worry time'.** Allocate time in the day or evening to think about what worries you. If you come across things during the day, try not to think about them until your 'worry time'. You could even try and make this time a time you make du'a to Allah and talk to Him about your worries.
- **Speak to family or friends.** Identify at least one person who you feel comfortable talking to.

⁵ <https://qurancentral.com/>

Islamic Guidance on Dealing with Stress

At times of hardship, we are advised to turn to Allah. Whilst you can make dua in your native language for whatever you may wish, there are Prophetic and Quranic supplications that you may want to incorporate into your routine.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْخُزْنِ، وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ، وَضَلَعِ الدَّيْنِ وَغَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ

"O Allah, I seek refuge in You from worry and grief, from incapacity and laziness, from cowardice and miserliness, from being heavily in debt and from being overpowered by men." [Al-Bukhari]

It is narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "There is no one who says in the morning of every day and the evening of every night, three times but nothing will harm him." [Tirmidhi]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

"In the name of Allah with Whose Name nothing on earth or in heaven harms and He is the All-Hearing the All-Knowing and is then harmed by anything."

رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

"Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear. And pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy upon us. You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people." [Qur'an, 2:286]

This is the du'a of Prophet Yunus, mentioned in Surah Anbiya, Verse 87. From this dua, we are reminded that we should be patient in all of our affairs and constantly beseech Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said regarding this du'a: "Every person in a state of distress who has used this supplication has had God remove his distress" [Tirmidhi].

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِ

"There is no God but You, glory be to You, I was one of the wrongdoers."

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبَرَصِ وَالْجُنُونِ وَالْجُدَامِ وَمِنْ سَيِّئِ الْأَسْقَامِ

Anas reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, would say, *"O Allah, I seek refuge in you from leprosy, madness, degenerative diseases, and evil sicknesses."* [Sunan Abi Dawud, Hadith: 1549]

Tips for Mosque to Ensure the Well-Being of the Community:

- Consider arranging **daily talks or events** via audio or video links. Some masjids have daily talks during the day & Quranic recitation in the evenings.
 - This may help those who relied on the mosque for their well-being and sense of community feel engaged and uplifted.
- Consider setting up **volunteer groups** to support the vulnerable and elderly, particularly those with health conditions, mobility restrictions or those in isolation
 - These groups could help obtain groceries or supplies if needed, or provide emotional support
- **Engage potential volunteers.** Many members of the community might have more spare time and will benefit from being involved in community work.
- **Signpost** people to local services. Some may be struggling financially⁶. Some may need mental health support

When and How to seek Medical Attention:

If you are still struggling despite self help measures⁷ then call your GP, local mental services⁸ or one of the helplines

www.myh.org.uk

info@myh.org

0808 808 2008

<https://muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk/>

0208 908 6715

www.sakoon.co.uk

info@sakoon.org.uk

07943 561 561

www.inspiredminds.org.uk

There is wisdom behind these challenges we are facing, these extraordinary times. There is a reason why you have been chosen to face these challenges. Use it as an opportunity to work on strengthening your connection with Allah. Every opportunity is a blessing.

British Islamic Medical Association

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covid@britishima.org

⁶ <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

⁷ <https://web.nrw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/>

⁸ <https://hubofhope.co.uk/>