



## TIPS FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH AMIDST COVID-19

Thoughts and suggestions to strengthen our emotional health awareness

**Normal Stress** = a part of everyday life.

**Tolerable Stress** = preparing for a big exam or presentation

**Toxic Stress** = chronic stress overload that can lead to health issues that include anxiety and depression.

**Chronic Stress** overload can be brought on by:

- Social isolation or significant social changes
- Major disruption to everyday life
- Health crises and health threats
- Employment changes (i.e. new technology demands)
- Financial threats
- School pressures (i.e. schools are now teaching online)

Any of these occurring over a prolonged period of time can put stress on our relationships with work, ministry, family, friends, and within ourselves. Chronic stress can lead to anxiety and depression. The below shows the symptomatic differences between these mental health conditions.

<b>ANXIETY</b>	<b>DEPRESSION</b>
Feeling panicked, panic attacks	Persistent sad, negative mood
Shortness of breath	Restlessness
Trembling and shaking	Irritability
Accelerated heart rate	Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
Muscle tension	Fatigue, low-energy
Dizziness	Feeling persistently dissatisfied
Worrying or feeling overwhelmed	Thoughts of death or suicide
Repetitive negative or anxious thoughts	

### **BUILDING RESILIENCY:**

#### **1. Healthy Life-Style**

- Daily meditation practices
- Progressive muscle relaxation exercises
- Getting enough quality sleep
- Good nutrition
- Create a safe, quiet space for stillness
- Daily physical exercise

- Take 5 minutes of quiet time listening to Jesus.
- Be compassionate, encouraging, and affirming. Look for the good in your situation and in others, and share it with them.
- Journal, use coloring books to focus and center your brain.

## 2. Cognitive Psychology

- Take every thought captive, and kill the "A.N.T.S." (Automatic Negative Thoughts). These ANTS pop into our heads and cause us to get upset, depressed, and anxious.
- Example of ANTS: "all or nothing" thinking, focusing on the negative, fortune telling, "always" thinking
- To overcome ANTS, become aware of the dialogue in your head. Identify an ANT, write it down, identify its type, and kill it by writing down more realistic version of the same thought.

### For example:

**ANT:** "This virus will never go away, but my work will.

**ANT Species:** Fortune telling and all or nothing

**Kill the ANT:** This isn't true. Solutions are being developed, and my work may be needed more now than ever in the future.

- Remember that your brain is happier when you exercise! Exercise releases the "feel good" chemicals that help with our sense of wellbeing.

## 3. Positive Psychology

- Start each day with: "today will be a great day in the Lord."
- Make a daily gratitude list. Write them down, 3-5 things each day.
- Share with others what you appreciate about today, no matter how simple.
- Contemplate how you will emerge stronger.
- Discover purpose and meaning in this time that will strengthen you in the future.

## 4. Acceptance and Commitment Psychology

- Accept what is currently not changeable.
- Meditate on eternal values that will never change.

### Additional Support:

There are times we may need additional or more specific support, coaching, or counsel. Elbow Tree Christian Counseling is available as a resource for those in need of professional counseling or coaching. We are offering in-person sessions, as well as phone and video telehealth sessions. For more information or to schedule an appointment, you can call the office: 904-559-1944 or visit our website [www.elbowtreeflorida.com](http://www.elbowtreeflorida.com).

### There are 3 easy ways to schedule an appointment or find out more information:

1. Visit [www.elbowtreeflorida.com](http://www.elbowtreeflorida.com)
2. Contact the front office by phone: 904.559.1944
3. Send an email to [turnhere@elbowtreeflorida.com](mailto:turnhere@elbowtreeflorida.com)