

## **The 10 key recommendations for strengthening mental health during the coronavirus pandemic**

*Handle information with care.* Search specifically at trustworthy sources like the Robert Koch Institute or the WHO for information. Remember that the situation is dynamic and information evolves and changes. Take regular information breaks to switch off.

*Maintain your routines or develop new ones.* Make sure to have a varied daily structure. Set fixed times for eating and getting up. Call your friends, go for a walk or read a book.

*Maintain social contacts.* Communication with and trust in others are essential in times of crisis and are particularly important. Use networking opportunities such as email, video telephony or chat programs and keep in touch.

*Accept the complexity of the situation.* Develop an accepting attitude for the current situation, to release energy for other areas on which you have influence over. In this way you can gradually free yourself from stressful thoughts.

*Take care of yourself.* Get enough sleep, eat a healthy diet and exercise sufficiently. Avoid harmful strategies, such as the consumption of alcohol or other substances to regulate your emotions.

*Take responsibility.* You have a significant influence on your fellow human beings in times of crisis. Take care of your friends, family and especially old people. Offer support and help each other.

*Reduce stress regularly.* Use sports or relaxation techniques (mindfulness, progressive muscle relaxation, ...) to reduce stress and recover.

*Be open with your children.* Talk to your children, reassure them that you are there and are taking care of them. Discuss your plans for the next weeks. Keep calm and clarify open questions.

*Prepare for isolation.* Think of this as a time out where you can shape your day in a self-determined way. Use the time to reflect on yourself. Ensure entertainment through books, games or by learning new things. Talk to your partner or family about what happens if you should argue.

*Seek professional help with acute stress.* If, for example, panic or depression becomes unendurable, contact the patient telephone at the Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (116117) or the Telephone Counselling Service (0800 - 111 0 111 or 0800 – 111 0 222). If you have acute suicidal thoughts, please contact the emergency service of your local psychiatric hospital or the emergency services (112) immediately.