

# Mental health and COVID-19 for School Staff

## It is normal to feel worried

The uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 and the sense of added responsibility can be stressful.

Emotional reactions may include:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Stress from having to regularly monitor yourself and constantly monitor students for symptoms
- Sadness because friends or loved ones have fears of getting the virus from you
- Frustration with regular changes to job assignments and having to constantly adapt
- Disappointed about not being able to engage with students how you normally would
- Irritated and less empathetic towards students and fellow staff as you feel emotionally exhausted

## Coping strategies to deal with the stress and uncertainty

### Limit media consumption about COVID-19

- Set aside a few hours a day to disconnect from the news
- Can do more harm than good - it is easier to find the negative stories that add to stress level

### Use mindfulness to help manage difficult emotions

- Allow yourself to acknowledge and feel the different emotions
- Try not to avoid, minimize, or numb the emotional pain (e.g., using substances to cope)

### Distract yourself with self-care

- Act as short-term solutions to improve mood and help deal with your emotions
- Examples: call a friend; go for a walk; do hobbies

### Practice self-compassion

- Accept and acknowledge that it is okay to make mistakes
- Try not to get stuck in a negative loop of thinking "what if...?"
- Do not let shame or stigma prevent you from seeking help

### Use problem-solving skills

- Break down stressors into smaller tasks that are doable
- Set manageable expectations with family caregiving
- Reach out to family, friends, or colleagues for help with tasks

### Get back to the basics

- Eat nutritious meals, be active, get quality sleep, and stay hydrated
- Stay focused on what you have control over and seek help when needed

## Local mental health resources available

If you notice that your symptoms of stress and anxiety are causing you significant distress or are interfering with your ability to function normally, please reach out for support.

### City of Guelph and Wellington County

- Here 24/7 Addiction, Mental Health and Crisis Services; 1-888-437-3247
- Family Counselling and Support Services; 1-888-821-3760

### Dufferin County

- 24.7 Crisis Support; 1-888-811-2222
- Dufferin Child and Family Services; 519-941-1530