

UTSA Counseling and Mental Health Services

Tips and Recommendations for Managing Distress Related to Coronavirus/Covid-19

Recent news reports about the novel coronavirus, travel restrictions, and concerns for our own and our loved ones' health may contribute to increased mental and emotional health distress. Please reach out to [our office](#) or other [campus resources](#) if you (or another member of our campus community you know) are experiencing any of the following:

- Excessive worry, fear, and/or feelings of being “stressed” or overwhelmed.
- Persistent sadness, tearfulness, and/or loss of interest in pleasurable activities.
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or dread about the future.
- Unexplained physical symptoms, such as upset stomach, increased heart rate, nausea, fatigue, etc.
- Increased anger, irritability, agitation and/or disruptive behaviors.
- Inability to concentrate or focus.
- Significant changes in sleep, appetite and/or self-care.
- Social isolation or withdrawal.
- Fear or avoidance of public spaces.
- Thoughts about death, dying and/or suicide.
- Impulsive, reckless or risky behaviors (substance abuse, self-injury, etc.)

Tips for Managing Emotional/Psychological Distress

- Acknowledge your feelings and emotions. Allow yourself time to reflect on what you are feeling and how you may be reacting to or coping with these feelings.
- Try to maintain your normal day-to-day activities and routines.
- Stay connected. Resist withdrawing and isolating yourself from your family and friends. Maintaining social connections can foster a sense of normality and provide valuable opportunities for sharing your feelings and relieving stress.
- Seek accurate information from credible news sources. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, for example, has a [webpage](#) dedicated to providing factual information on the novel coronavirus. You may also find useful information from local or state public health agencies.
- Limit exposure to social media and news outlets that do not provide any new information and/or sensationalizes the facts. Pay attention to positive news instead of only focusing on negative and fear-producing reports.
- Follow protection and [prevention tips](#) provided by qualified medical professionals, including from [UTSA's Student Health Services](#).
- Seek out and utilize on campus resources. In addition to CMHS, you can also reach out to an RA, a peer mentor, campus ministry, [Office of Global Initiatives](#), a professor, your

academic dean/advisor, or another student to share and talk about your concerns and experiences.

Mutual Trust, Respect, Civility & Dignity

Counseling and Mental Health Services is aware that fear and anxiety can lead to mistrust, bias, prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping and micro-aggressions, which we are committed to proactively combating. To maintain and promote mutual trust, respect, civility and dignity in our community, please consider practicing the following:

- Be mindful of your behaviors, thoughts, beliefs, and/or biases about Chinese students, faculty or staff or others from another country.
- Avoid generalizing about students, faculty or staff who may be sick, protecting themselves from getting sick, and/or from abroad.
- Don't avoid Chinese students, study abroad students, faculty or staff.
- Practice and seek healthcare if you believe you are sick.
- Listen and attend to each other with empathy, kindness and compassion.

Referrals for Student, Faculty and Staff Concerns

- The UTSA crisis helpline is available 24/7, call 210-458-4140, option 3
- UTSA provides students with membership to the TAO app with self-care modules, exercises and information. TAO provides online self-help for depression, anxiety and other common concerns. Download the app or visit the [TAO website](#) to get started.
- Walk in appointments for students are available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.
- A concerned student can also call 210-458-4140, option 2, to schedule a session.
- Counseling services are also available for faculty and staff through the Employee Assistance (EAP) Program. Call 1-866-EAP-2400 for assistance.

**Adapted from Fordham University Counseling and Psychological Services*