Coping with Fear and Anxiety Related to the Coronavirus

In this time of uncertainty many employees may be struggling with fear and anxiety related to the recent outbreak of the Coronavirus. Employees may:

- Be concerned about contracting the virus.
- Be worried that about possibility of quarantine, isolation or being cut off from the outside world in some way.
- Worried that they will not have access to necessary goods and services to help them to feel prepared because of shortages.
- Be concerned about the financial impact.
- If employees are already struggling with an underlying behavioral health concern like anxiety or depression, their symptoms may worsen.
- Stress can also worsen existing relationship problems.

See below for some strategies to care for yourself and your loved ones:

- Take care of yourself. It’s important to get updated information from reliable sources. Set aside 5-10 minutes a day to accomplish this and then move on with life.
- Stick with your normal routine. It is predictable and helps with feelings of safety and control.
- Monitor your screen time. Choose to watch positive shows and look at positive web sites as opposed to information that is negative or violent.
- It is important to rest, eat well, and exercise to relieve pent-up feelings and stress.
- Avoid any increase in caffeine, alcohol and over the counter drugs not recommended by your healthcare provider. These things can make anxiety or depressed feelings worse.
- Keep your thoughts focused in the present. Avoid catastrophic thinking without a basis in reality.
- Practice mindful breathing strategies to help calm anxiety and keep your mind focused.
- Spend time doing things you enjoy. Now might be a good time to try a new activity including puzzles, painting other crafts, or even cooking a new recipe. These activities can help to keep your attention focused.
- Write down your thoughts and feelings. This can be especially helpful if you are having trouble with repetitive thoughts.
- Don’t label yourself as “crazy”. Remind yourself that increased stress and anxiety are normal reactions shared by many.
- Talk with people you trust who are positive thinkers. They can help you to feel supported during periods of stress.
- It can be helpful to consider the possible positive results that can come from a crisis. The experience can lead to a reassessment of what is important, an opportunity to make changes, and to be more appreciative of those around us. For many people, getting through a crisis can help build self-confidence.
Consider talking to an EAP counselor if sleep, appetite or overall function is impacted or if you are experiencing depression, anxiety or relationship problems because of increased stress related to the Corona Virus.