

# PARAGON SECURITY

**To:** All Paragon Staff  
**Re:** Mental Health Awareness  
**Date:** March 25, 2020

---

Over the past several weeks, 24-hour news of COVID-19 has dominated our television sets, computers, radio and every-day conversations, both at work and home, giving rise to an increased level of fear and anxiety as we try to cope with what is happening all around us. It is common for individuals to feel stressed and worried which may include:

- Fear of falling ill and dying
- Avoiding health facilities for fear of becoming infected
- Fear of losing livelihood, not being able to work or even being dismissed from work
- Fear of being socially excluded because of being quarantined or associated with the disease
- Feeling powerless in protecting loved ones or being separated from loved ones due to the restrictions of social distancing and/or quarantine measures we are facing
- Feeling of helplessness, boredom, loneliness due to isolation
- Etc.,

For many, those self-coping mechanisms, having now been bombarded non-stop for several weeks are starting to falter and our mental well-being strained as a result. It is important to know that you are not alone and for that reason we went on a search of what we can do differently to combat this heightened level of stress.

In so doing, we came across several articles and one in particular from the World Health Organization (WHO) that was released on March 12, 2020 and have compiled a list of general tips that we feel may be of use to you, if you are one of the many feeling stressed-out over COVID-19.

In general:

1. COVID-19 is affecting people from all walks of life. There is no border, ethnicity or nationality that hasn't, or won't likely be affected, so please be empathetic to all those affected. People affected deserve our support, compassion and kindness. Those that are sick did nothing wrong.

2. Do not refer to those people ill as “victims” or “diseased”, they are people. Those recovering will go on with their lives. Reduce the stigma.
3. Minimize watching, reading or listening to news that causes you to feel anxious or distressed and take practical steps to protect yourself and loved ones. Get the facts from a trusted source by setting a specific time (once or twice during the day) to update yourself.
4. Be supportive of others. A simple call to check on friends and family will help to create solidarity in addressing this crisis together
5. Find opportunities to amplify positive stories and images and acknowledge the role you and others play in protecting and keeping people safe.
6. Ensure you have enough rest between shifts, eat healthy and engage in physical activity
7. Avoid using unhelpful coping strategies such as tobacco, alcohol, drugs and unhealthy food(s)
8. Understand that COVID-19 is unique and unprecedented, so some of the standard self-coping strategies that worked “quickly” in the pass to manage stress may not be as effective today. Be patient and continue to use what worked in the past.
9. Avoidance and distancing from people due to fear is not uncommon. Use digital methods to stay connected.
10. Better understand the support available from various levels of government
11. Children (for those that have them now home due to school disruptions) are not exempt from feeling fear and sadness. Help them find positive ways to express themselves. Children feel relieved when they can communicate their feelings in a safe way. Allow them to express themselves through activity such as playing or even painting/drawing
12. Maintain familiar routines as much as possible. Even create new ones given the restrictions upon us. Example: exercising, cleaning, reading, meditation, listening to music, etc.
13. It is common for people in insolation or facing restrictions in their day-to-day activities to get angry, agitated and become more withdrawn. Provide emotional support and don't be afraid to seek professional advice and support through the network of available resources available to us from local and provincial sources.
14. Be prepared and know in advance where and how to get practical help if needed.

During these times of stress, it's important to pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Keeping to regular routines as already mentioned, such as sleep times, family time etc., will help keep things in perspective.

In closing, it is important to recognize that we are all in this together and together we will prevail.

Thank you

**Paragon Protection**