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Are You Feeling COVID-19 Fatigue?

When the brain experiences uncertainty, it activates a "fight or flight" response in the body's nervous system. After a long year filled with pandemic-related worries and precautions, this constant state of alert is taking a toll on many. Mental health experts have identified this new phenomenon as COVID-19 fatigue.

Your emotional wellbeing has never been more important. Caring for your mind and body can help you prevent COVID-19 fatigue from setting in. Here are three areas to consider:

Maintaining Your Physical and Emotional Health
Create a greater sense of security and comfort for yourself by establishing and sticking to a routine as much as possible:
- Schedule regular mealtimes. Be sure to eat a healthy mix of foods including fruits and vegetables and avoid sugary sweets.
- Exercise for at least 20 minutes three or more times a week. Use free online resources to try yoga or a new cardio routine indoors or get outside to walk, run or bike if your weather permits.
- Maintain a sleep routine. Set consistent wake-up and bedtimes and avoid screen time just before bed.

- Take breaks to de-stress. Practice stress management techniques by listening to soothing music, going on a short walk or doing mindfulness exercises.
- Make time for things you enjoy. Read more, try a new hobby, or take time for a refreshing long shower or bath.
- Avoid using alcohol or other substances as ways to cope. A glass of wine may feel like it relieves stress or temporarily helps you feel better. However, rather than facing difficult emotions head on, continual use of these coping methods can perpetuate and even increase your distress.

Keeping Safely in Contact
Socially distancing and isolating from coworkers, friends and loved ones for so long has been a particularly difficult aspect of the pandemic. It's important to continue connecting through regular check-in calls or video time. Renew virtual "game nights" or start a book club. Eating meals "together" can also help you experience a sense of togetherness.

Helping others is another way to foster community. You could do a neighbor's yardwork, offer errand or grocery run services or organize a virtual food drive.

Understanding the Levels of Risk
When COVID cases begin to drop, it will be tempting to abandon current guidelines.

However, to remain healthy and ensure that the disease does not continue to spread, continue to wear masks, practice safe social distancing and isolate after exposure.

If you are already feeling the effects of COVID-19 fatigue, your SupportLinc Care Advocate can provide in-the-moment support and connect you to additional resources. Assistance is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, at no cost to you.

Source: https://memory.ai/timely-blog/ managers-support-employee-mental-health

To access services available through SupportLinc, call 1-800-475-3EAP (3327) or visit www.supportlinc.com

Recharge by Unplugging

The Mindfulness Toolkit

Mindfulness is the state of active, open attention to the present. It allows you to observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them to be "good" or "bad."

To learn more about how to incorporate mindfulness into your daily route visit www.mindfulness.tools today.

Whether you are trying to juggle your job, caregiving, remote learning and/or staying healthy in the pandemic, it can be difficult to keep work and home life in sync. Maintaining a work-life balance helps reduce stress levels, prevents burnout, improves your mental health and increases your productivity. When you are off the clock, there is power in truly stepping away for a short period of time. The benefits of unplugging include:

Productivity Goes Up and You Are More Focused
Stepping away from all screens for at least 20 minutes once a day allows your eyes to rest, your thoughts to slow down and stress to alleviate. When you come back, you will find that your focus has improved. If you don't need your phone for work, it can help your productivity to put your phone away or turn it on silent, so noise and notifications are not constant distractions.

Your Sleep and Health Improves
Blue light from screens tells your brain to stay alert, which can keep you awake at night. Turning your phone, computer and television off an hour before you go to sleep allows your mind to relax and leads to deeper rest. When you wake up, you will feel renewed energy and be better able to function throughout the day.

It Can Reduce Anxiety and Depression
Disconnecting from social media for a few hours, or even an entire day, can improve your mental health. Studies have shown that avoiding social comparison and reducing the fear of missing out increases your contentment and overall happiness.

Unplugging Improves Your Relationships
Spending a small amount of time away from all screens can help you build deeper connections with those around you by appreciating the joy they bring into your everyday life. Make time together count by focusing on your loved ones instead of your devices or emails.

It Rewires Your Brain Positively
Constant noises and notifications interrupt thought processes, leading to increased stress and irritability. Silencing your phone and laptop when you aren't at work can break that pattern and help you experience the power of unplugging.

Source: https://www.forbes.com/sites/meimeifox/2019/09/24/8-reasons-why-you-should-unplug-one-day-a-week/?sh=7a6ada831b79

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