



## **PSYCHOLOGICAL COPING DURING A PANDEMIC:**

### **Managing Fears and Anxiety around Coronavirus**

As information about Coronavirus unfolds, there can be a wide range of reactions.

#### **Common Reactions**

There can be a wide range of reactions that vary over days, weeks, or months. These are natural and common reactions experienced when dealing with the unknown:

- Anxiety, worry, panic
- Feeling helpless
- Social withdrawal
- Difficulty concentrating and sleeping
- Anger and short sighted
- Hyper-vigilance to your health and body

Identifying and recognizing the above symptoms provides a healthy proactive mindset, preparatory to managing your stress.

#### **Manage your stress:**

- **Limit your media consumption** sufficiently only to stay informed. Take some time for yourself, go for a walk, or spend time with friends & family doing things that you enjoy.
- **Get the facts:** Find people and resources you can depend on for accurate health information. ([www.alberta.ca/coronavirus](http://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus); World Health Organization)
- **Keep yourself healthy:** eat healthy foods, exercise, and get enough sleep and rest.
- **Stress & anxiety about the future is not productive.** Instead, work on issues you care about.
- **Keep connected.** Maintain your social networks (even via social media & telephone).
- **Have a plan** -- Developing emergency plans for potential scenarios can lessen your anxiety.
- **Seek additional help.** Individuals who feel an overwhelming worry or anxiety can seek additional professional mental health support.

**Siksika Mental Health Psychological Services regarding COVID-19**

### **Objective:**

Our objective is for all clients to receive uninterrupted psychological treatment.

- The risk level in Siksika is low for COVID-19. Regularly scheduled treatment can continue, uninterrupted, if individual clients are feeling healthy.
- Sessions can also be completed online using a secure video psychological treatment platform (Doxy.me)
- In the event of an actual break-out, treatment services may continue, uninterrupted, online.

### **When to seek professional help:**

Therapists are trained to help others find constructive ways of dealing with anxiety & emotional stress. However, it may be unclear when it is appropriate to seek professional help. Contact a psychologist if:

- You feel an overwhelming nervousness or lingering sadness adversely affecting you.
- You notice persistent feelings of distress or hopelessness
- You feel like you are barely able to get through your daily responsibilities & activities

You can call 403-734-5660 to talk to a therapist.

### **Communicate with your children:**

- a. Discuss the news coverage of the coronavirus with honest and age-appropriate information.
- b. If your children are showing symptoms of anxiety help them focus on routines and schedules.
- c. Remember that children will observe your behaviors and emotions for cues on how to manage their own feelings during this time.