

Feel Anxious or Fearful during Covid19?

Why it is OK and What to do

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Good News

Are you feeling anxious and afraid due to Covid19? Having trouble sleeping and concerned about family, children, friends and neighbours? The Good News is there is nothing wrong with you and you are having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. It is natural to feel scared when you do not feel in control and life, as you know it, has changed dramatically.



To make things worse, we may feel that other people are coping better than we are. However,

a. You never know what is going in other peoples lives. Like a swan, they may seem to be gliding effortlessly while paddling furiously beneath the surface.

a. You may be more sensitive than others and while that is generally a good thing, you may also pick up on other peoples' anxiety and add it to your own.

What Can I do?

Remember

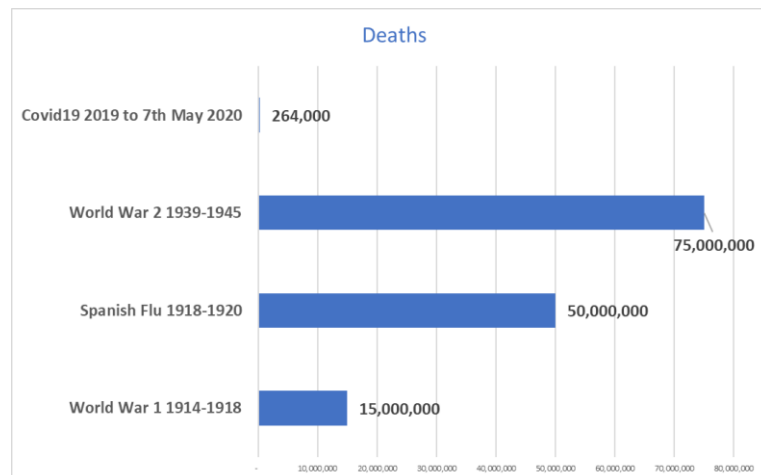
You have had difficult times in the past and gotten thorough them, you will get through this too. It is not what happens to us that matters but how we deal with it. It is unfair that older and more vulnerable family and friends are taking the brunt of this hit. But this too will pass.

Remind yourself

This is a tragedy, not a catastrophe. As you can see from the chart our grandparents and great parents experienced much worse.

It is a tragedy that our family and friends are dying on their own and a double tragedy that we cannot grieve or show our respect at their funeral as normal.

However, it is not the Spanish Flu which killed millions indiscriminately.



Refocus

If I were to ask you not to think of a pink elephant, it is very hard not to see one in your mind. As we are bombarded hourly with updates, comments and reminders of corona virus, it is difficult not to think of it also. It is easier the do and think of something else instead. For instance:

- Physical Exercise is always an good option. Walking, Gardening, Spring Cleaning, Attic Clean out. Anything that gets you up and moving.
- Develop a routine for yourself rather than letting the day get away from you.
- Read. Get lost in a good novel or expand knowledge.
- Sort out old photos. Scan, save and share them.
- Less media time. "If it bleeds, it leads" It is the job of the media to get you interested in the story, sometimes with sensational headlines, but we need to take responsibility for how much we listen to and watch. Less is better if it is making you anxious.

Summary

If you are feeling anxious, it is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. Remember, Remind, Refocus and this will end.

If you need more specific support, please feel free to contact a counsellor by visiting www.iacp.ie

Autobiographical statement:

Brendan O'Shaughnessy is an IACP accredited counsellor/psychotherapist/supervisor in private practice. He worked part-time with the Cork Marriage Counselling Centre for 28 years and has a higher diploma in Counselling from UCC. Brendan has been on the board of various charities, including the National Domestic Violence Agency. Brendan is now semi-retired from a multinational electronics company.

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