

Group Exercise: Addressing concerns and stress caused by COVID-19

(Kindly shared by Chris Huffine of "[Allies in Change](#)" in Oregon)

Time: 40-60 minutes within one group session

Materials: Whiteboard/posters & pens

Aim: To help men plan for the stressful situations that will come up due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to support them in finding ways of dealing with the extraordinary situation in a peaceful way

Exercise

Step 1: Ask men in the group to brainstorm things that are stressful or concern them about the COVID-19 pandemic and note them on a whiteboard/poster/...

Step 2: Ask the men to brainstorm ways of dealing with these concerns/stresses

Step 3: Discuss the situation and the solutions that the men brainstormed



Resources for facilitators to add to the brainstorm – NOT to share with the group

Potential COVID-19 concerns:

- Social isolation
- Fear of getting sick
- Public transportation fears
- Getting sick
- Misinformation
- Not getting adequate supplies
- Not getting medical help
- Appointments getting cancelled
- Slower economy/stock market
- Work shutting down
- Not going on vacation
- Public entertainment/events getting cancelled
- Not being able to travel
- Fear of loved ones/children getting sick/dying
- Loved ones getting sick/dying
- Concerns for elderly/medically vulnerable getting sick/dying
- Not knowing who is sick/infected
- Being in quarantine
- Being in close quarters with family members
- Kids out of school and having to stay at home
- Additional childcare demands
- Feeling imprisoned at home
- Loss of income/unable to pay bills
- Unable to comply with probation/child welfare requirements
- Dealing with other people's fear
- Risk of losing medical benefits
- Medical expenses

Potential ways to manage COVID-19 concerns:

- Talk about your feelings/concerns with others
- Know the facts
- Know the symptoms
- Stay current on the latest information
- Pace yourself/limit news consumption
- Keep perspective—this, too, shall pass
- Manage your own distress
- Allow others to have their distress
- Acknowledge/validate people's fears
- Support your loved ones in their distress in the ways they wish to be supported
- Identify and practice practical ways to reducing infection risk
- Focus on what you can do rather than on what you can't



- Keep a clean/safe environment
- Stay engaged/live/play
- Draw on your sense of spirituality
- Keep calm
- Identify positive family activities
- Take breaks from parenting/support the other parent taking breaks from parenting
- See it as a “staycation” (=vacation at home)
- Brainstorm ways to get out of the house while practicing social distancing (e.g., going for walks/hikes, going for a drive, garden, have the kids play in an open area)
- Identify practical ways to co-exist when at home for long periods of time
- Identify projects to keep busy
- Prioritize what aspects of self-care that you can
- Use stress reduction techniques (e.g., conscious breathing, progressive relaxation, meditation)
- Work from home
- Reach out to others via the phone, email, texting, FaceTime, etc.
- Utilize community resources—both existing ones as well as new ones that may become available during this time
- Ask for assistance from others—emotional, practical, etc.
- Remember that you are not alone with this
- Practice self-compassion
- Practice compassion towards others—this is a hard time for all of us
- Reach out to those who are isolated and/or need assistance
- Be mindful of your emotional intensity and stress level
- Take time-outs as needed
- Be vigilant about becoming abusive and controlling—identify those situations/circumstances you are most likely to be tempted to behave that way