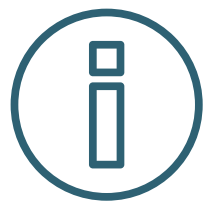


HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING TIMES OF WAR

RECOMMENDATIONS

CENTER FOR PSYCHOTRAUMATOLOGY AT VILNIUS UNIVERSITY AND LITHUANIAN SOCIETY FOR TRAUMA PSYCHOLOGY



Fear for one's safety and the safety of the loved ones are the most common feelings experienced by individuals during times of war. It is essential to understand that fright, stress, and anxiety in this context are normal responses that can help activate our bodies. Nevertheless, these feelings of constant threat can have negative consequences, especially when there are no military actions in the country. Anxiety and stress can affect our bodies' responses: increase blood pressure, speed up breathing, cause muscle tension. It can also make it extremely difficult to concentrate and divert our thoughts to other activities. Prolonged periods of stress will exhaust us and may even cause serious physical health problems. For this reason, it is crucial to take care of our psychological health and to channel our anxiety in the right direction.

Constantly checking the news and watching images from the war can increase your anxiety and stress. It is important to limit the time spent searching for new information: set a specific time, when, and how long you will read or watch the news. For example, you could use half an hour in the morning, at lunchtime, and in the evening for the updates. Use only trustworthy official sources to reduce the consumption of fake news.

Limit your news consumption



Help people affected by the war

Support for countries affected by war is crucial at this point, so it is important to evaluate your options to support people affected by this situation. We cannot directly fight the war, but each of us can find ways of supporting the individuals affected. We can disseminate official information, donate money or goods. Such support can help not only those directly affected but it can also reduce your anxiety, provide a greater sense of control and community.



Maintain social contacts



It is now very important to support each other. Talk to your loved ones, friends and work colleagues about your feelings and thoughts. If you see that your loved ones are going through a difficult time – don't be afraid to discuss it with them and show that you are ready to listen. Encourage them to take care of themselves.

Try to maintain your usual daily routine

Although, at the moment, it may seem difficult to carry out everyday activities, a regular routine can help you calm down and feel a greater sense of control. Different daily activities will also help divert your thoughts from the anxious ones and, as a result, reduce feelings of stress.



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Take care of your physical health

Constant stress can also affect your physical health. Currently, it is essential to take care of yourself and your loved ones. Make sure you and your family eat a healthy diet, get the right amount of sleep, and stay physically active. Avoid the consumption of alcohol and other substances.



Find exercises and activities that help you relax

In times of intense stress or anxiety, breathing exercises, meditation, and other relaxation techniques can help you calm down. If you are experiencing difficulties concentrating, audio recordings prepared by professionals can be used to help you follow these exercises. If you know of any other pleasant activities that help you relax, use them to maintain your emotional well-being. Although the current situation is stressful, allow yourself to have a good time. It is necessary to take a break from anxious thoughts in order to maintain your emotional balance.

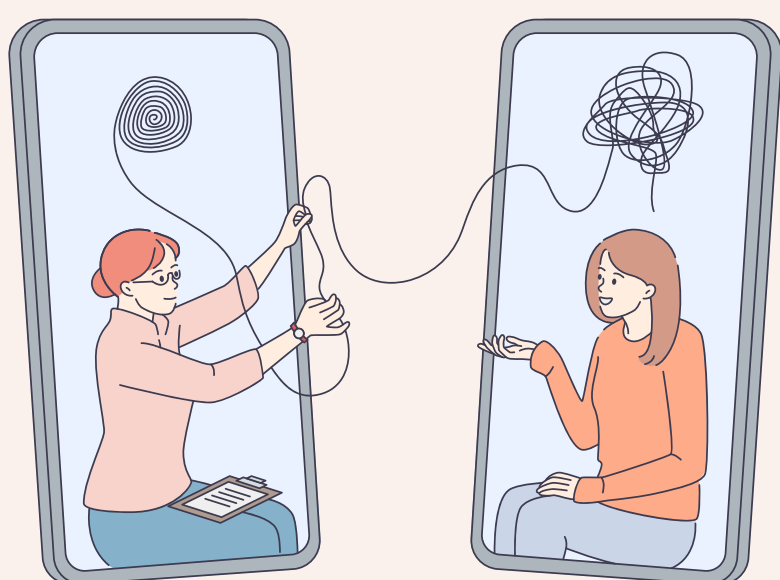


Recommendations for self-care



Seek professional psychological help if you do not feel well for a longer time

There are various training programs and mobile apps that provide a wealth of information on better understanding your emotions, learning to manage them, reducing anxiety, and improving your psychological well-being. If you do not feel well for a sustained period of time you should seek psychological help from a professional.



Prepare for emergencies

Although Lithuania is not currently involved in the war, being prepared for emergencies can help reduce anxiety by providing a greater sense of control and security. Find out how to prepare and what you should do in unexpected emergency situations in your country.

More information

