

Supporting Your Mental Wellbeing during COVID-19

for Domestic Workers

The COVID-19 situation has impacted everyone in Hong Kong, but it is clear MDWs have faced significant stressors and unique challenges during this time. No matter where you are at, it is normal to feel overwhelmed, anxious, stressed or frustrated towards the current situation.

If you notice that it is getting harder to cope with your emotions and thoughts, it is okay to reach out and seek help. [Here](#) is a list of available support and resources for MDWs.

We all have mental health.

In face of the current situation, the least we could do is to take care of our own wellbeing - both physically and mentally, and also that of people around us.

It is important to remember that **taking care of your mental health doesn't necessarily mean you are experiencing mental health problems - we all have mental health.** It is how we used to describe our emotions, thoughts and feelings at the moment.

Mental health is just as important as physical health.

Most of the time, we are in a state of good mental health. This means we are relatively confident; we connect with our emotions and engage with the world around us; we can cope with stress, changes, and uncertainties in life; and work and live productively.

However, it is completely normal for our mental health to fluctuate, but recognising and taking steps to manage it can help us return back to a good mental health state.

Taking care of our mental wellbeing also helps prepare us to cope with stress and adversities better. It also helps us to provide better care for others without compensating our health for it.

Take care of your mental health

Recognise and acknowledge your emotions.

It is okay to feel anxious, stressed, frustrated, or any other emotions that you are having right now - **it is a normal and reasonable reaction to an abnormal and difficult situation.**

Recognising how you feel is the first step to managing how to cope and take care of yourself.

Maintain a healthy routine and look after your physical health.

Physical health and mental health are closely related, **taking care of your physical health can do wonders for our mental wellbeing.** Get enough sleep, eat regular nutritious meals and try to do some physical activity.



Connect with your social support.

Text, or schedule a call with your loved ones and your community - we know how hard it is to be so far away from family and friends for so long. There are several Facebook groups available that provide peer support and can be a great support system.

Celebrate small achievements.

Small things matter, especially in difficult times. Celebrate small and simple wins like completing things on your to-do list, connecting with your friends, and eating a good breakfast.

Take a break from the pandemic.

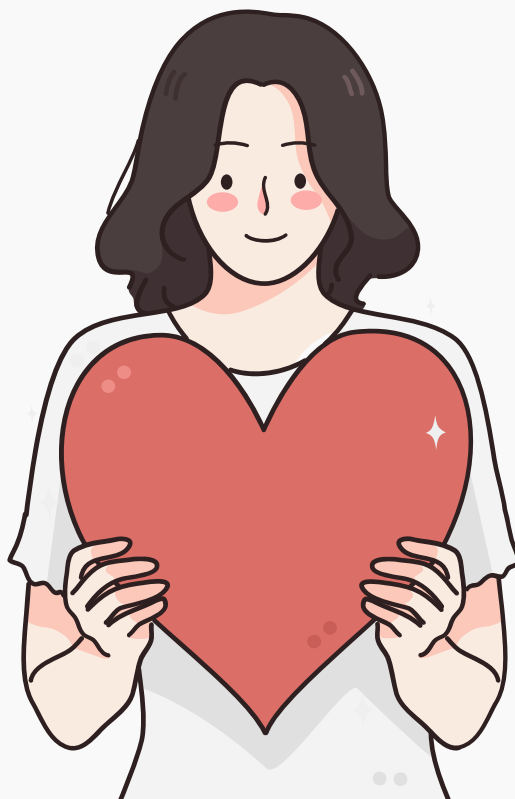
For instance, set a fixed amount of time for social media scroll and take a break from it; Or actively engage in activities that spark joy.

Receive information from verified sources.

Try to acquire resources and information from verified sources, such as from the government, or medical professionals - carefully choose your source of information as social media may not contain the most accurate and validated updates.

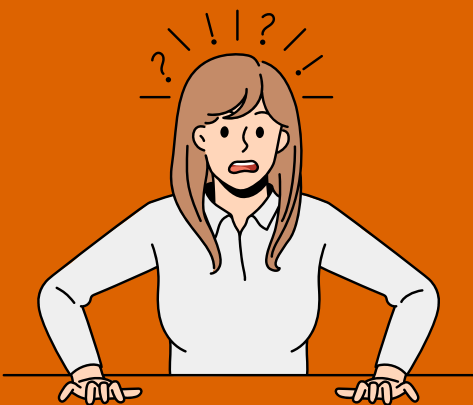
Be kind to yourself.

When you catch yourself being self-critical, try asking yourself "What would I say to a friend who was in this same situation?"



Coping with anxiety

Try to recognise signs of anxiety



- Noticing your mind **being preoccupied** with the pandemic
- Becoming **much more sensitive** towards news or information regarding the situation
- **Having trouble staying focused** and/or **concentrating on work**
- Having **trouble falling asleep** or **feeling restless**
- **Physical sensations**, e.g. shallow breathing, faster heartbeat, stomachache, etc.
- **Constantly checking social media or news sources for information**

Managing overwhelming emotions and anxiety

Ground yourself.

Utilise your five senses to bring your attention back to the present moment. Try to name...

5 things
you can see

4 things
you can hear

3 things
you can touch

2 things
you can smell

1 thing
you can taste

Try to pinpoint your worries.

Note down your worries (on a piece of paper, or on your phone), and identify the worries where practical solutions can be planned to solve the problem. As much as possible, try to let go of the worries that are out of your control. You may find it useful to use grounding techniques or mindfulness exercises to help you with this.

Other ways to manage anxiety

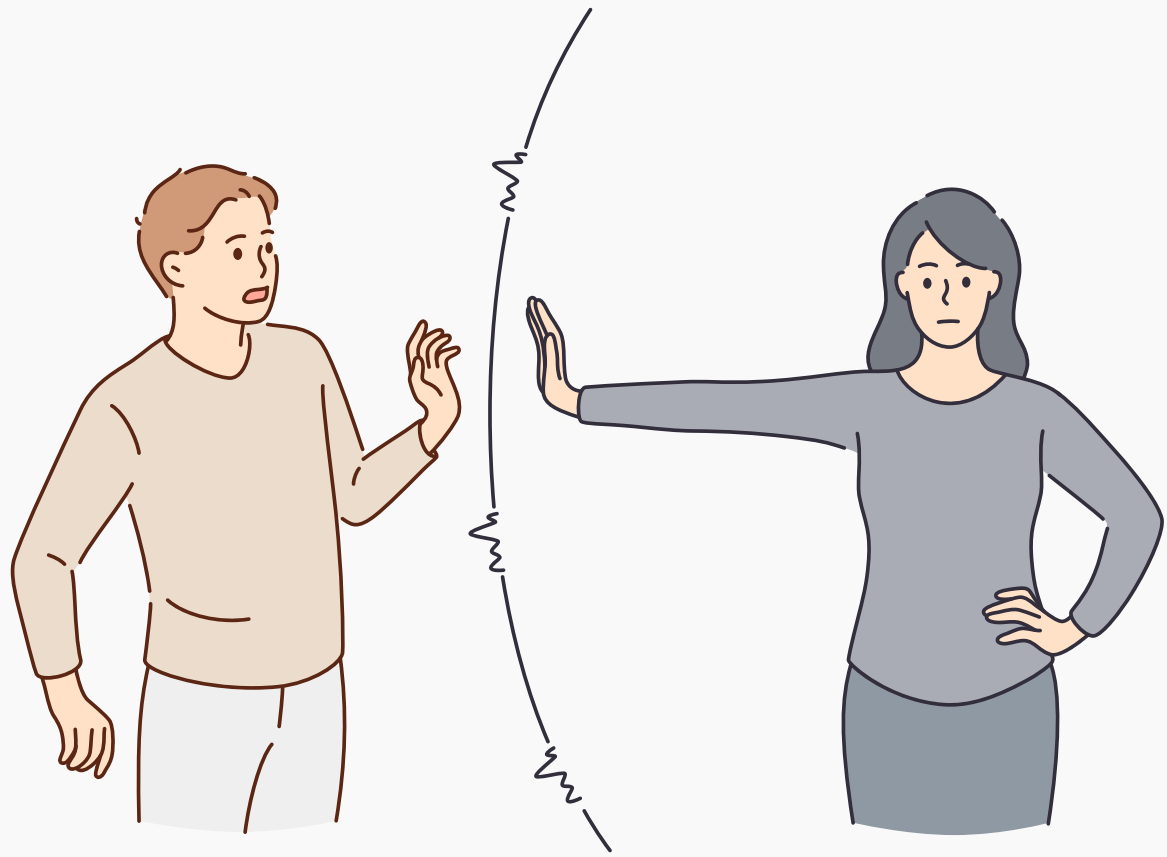


- **Use any methods you have available** that have helped you cope with anxiety before and share it with the people around you.
- **Keep moving** - stay active!
- **Engage in hobbies and activities that bring you joy**, even if it just means watching YouTube/Netflix
- **Seek help.** If the feelings of overwhelming anxiety do not feel manageable, reach out to a friend or loved one, or seek professional advice from the list of services [here](#).

Managing feelings of loneliness and isolation



- **Connect with others.** Text them, schedule time for a call or Facetime.
- **Check in with loved ones.** Even a short text care and make their day – it is also a great way to remind yourself that you matter to someone else.
- **Reach out to local support groups.** Reach out to local organisations for support and resources. List available [here](#).



Setting boundaries for work

- **Take a break from work.** If you stay at home during your rest day, spend some time taking a break and engage in activities you enjoy.
- **Have an honest and open discussion with your family.** Open up about your stress and concerns with your family and work out a plan together - you don't have to face the problem alone.

Communicating your boundaries is also essential in maintaining a healthy family relationship.

- **Communicate with your employer.** If you find yourself struggling at work, try to communicate with your employer to see if any arrangements can be made.
- **Know your rights.** You should have at least one rest day per week; your employer cannot make you work. If you are requested to work, or in face of unreasonable demands, you have the right to say no.
- **Reach out to your agency, your support system or local NGOs for help.** [Here](#) is a list of support services available provided by local NGOs for individuals who are in need.

About Mind HK

Mind HK (Mind Mental Health Hong Kong Limited) is a S88 registered charity (91/16471), which launched in 2017. Our vision is to ensure no one in Hong Kong has to face a mental health problem alone. Through resources, training, and outreach campaigns and programmes, we help to educate around mental health and remove the associate stigma, with the aim of achieving the best mental health for all in Hong Kong. With existing collaboration and research efforts, we are here to support Hong Kong in becoming a global leader and regional model for public mental health. For more on our work, mission and vision, please visit www.mind.org.hk.

Useful Resources

If you want to learn more about other mental health topics, please visit **our Mental Health A to Z**: www.mind.org.hk/mental-health-a-to-z/

Additional resource for domestic workers:
www.mind.org.hk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/EN-MDW-resources.pdf
COVID-19 Mental Health Information Hub:
Mental health resources and local supports available to take care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic
mind.org.hk/covid-information-hub

If you are in an emergency or crisis situation, please contact 999, or go to your nearest A&E.

More local urgent support in Hong Kong:
mind.org.hk/find-help-now
More non-urgent support can be found here:
mind.org.hk/community-directory/
How & where to seek help in Hong Kong:
mind.org.hk/getting-help/



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CONTACT US

Address:
Mind HK, Unit B, 18/F
One Capital Place
18 Luard Road.
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

www.mind.org.hk

Email: hello@mind.org.hk

Tel.: 3643 0869

