



▶▶ Managing Fear of Work, Shopping, and Public Spaces

It can be unsettling and anxiety-provoking to find yourself suddenly afraid of places that previously brought you stability, safety and normalcy. Pay attention to your emotional well-being, and avoid over-exposing yourself to places and situations that might increase anxiety and make you feel more unsafe.

Stay at home and do not go out unless you must

Most stores offer groceries delivery and online orders during this time. If you do need to go shopping for food, taking some of the following basic precautionary measures may lessen your fear and anxiety:

- Maintain your distance from other shoppers.
- Wear a mask.
- Be sure to wipe down handles of shopping carts.
- Avoid conversation with others and keep your contact with others at a minimum.
- Remember that the virus can remain on surfaces for days, so be aware of what surfaces you touch. You may want to use disposable/washable gloves.
- Avoid handling fruits and vegetables that you do not plan to purchase.
- If possible, plan and buy enough to reduce the number of times you need to go shopping. This applies to your medications too. If you are picking up prescriptions, ask your health care provider about getting a 90 day supply vs. a 60 or 30 day supply. Some pharmacies offer drive-thru pick-ups and delivery through mail.
- Once you return home, remove your shoes and clothing, take a shower and disinfect surfaces you have touched. Relax at home and keep your mind at ease – listening to music, reading a book or watching a movie can help you focus on activities you enjoy.

Worry of financial impact (personal, family, communal, national)

Millions of people have filed for unemployment since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. With these staggering figures, anxiety and fear are normal reactions. Much anxiety stems from uncertainties about the future. Worrying about finances is common during this time.

- The first step to overcoming financial anxiety is accepting that your life is going to be different for a while and focusing on tasks you can control.
- If you are becoming increasingly worried about your finances, take stock in the resources you do have.
- Focus on your strengths instead of your deficits; set goals and objectives to help you cope and adapt.
- Some people are emotionally triggered or soothed by shopping, including overbuying or stockpiling. Whatever your coping style may be, avoid allowing your anxieties and fears to negatively impact your buying practices.

If you are in crisis and need help, call the ACCESS Line at 1-800-854-7771. Help is available 24/7.

You should seek help IF:

- You find yourself having severe depressive thoughts due to fear and/or isolation, and you are afraid you might harm yourself.
- You are in a relationship where there is domestic violence that risks your safety and well-being and/or that of children in your home.