MANAGING TRAUMA-REACTIONS DURING STRESSFUL TIMES

INCREASE

Predictability
- Establish routines through a simple schedule: balance work + play + self-care
- Plan things to look forward to, no matter how small
- Set recurring virtual meetings with loved ones

Connection
- Reach out at least 1x per day
- Share meals, make music/sing together, play games
- If you can, choose video or phone conversations over simple text messages

Safety
- What makes you feel safe: soothing music, pleasant scents, gentle touch
- Create privacy physically and mentally
- If you are not safe, don’t wait to reach out: call 1-800-799-7233 or through chat

Purpose
- Maintain connection to loved ones to be supportive during these changing times
- Practice self-compassion
- Explore your spirituality

DECREASE

Immobility
- Get up every hour and stretch, set a reminder
- Move your body, e.g. W&M FitWell Classes
- Change your perspective by moving your chair/couch

Numbing
- Limit mindless distractions (e.g. 1h of browsing), then return to scheduled activities
- Limit/abstain from alcohol and other substance use
- Use mindfulness to feel grounded in the moment, e.g. W&M Mindfulness videos

Losing Sense of Time
- Remind yourself this will not last forever!
- Plan pleasant activities for each day and for after this is over
- Keep your sleep schedule on track, e.g. W&M A Rested Development

Source:
van der Kolk, B. (2020). Global Coronavirus Crisis – Steering ourselves and our clients through new and developing traumas

Created by William & Mary Counseling Center. For brief supportive services during business hours or for crisis services after hours and on weekends, call (757) 221-3620 or call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255. For a life-threatening emergency, call 911.