

## Self Care to Cope with COVID-19

By Mary Beth Lewis

Hey there, you beautiful and talented human.

I know the world is upside-down right now. The news can be scary, overwhelming and anxiety inducing.

Given this environment, what can we do? As you know, hand washing and staying home are the main directives. It is something we can all do for the greater good.

But what can we do for our own mental health?

We can control:

- How much news we consume. Smaller amounts are healthier.
- How we treat others around us.
- What we focus on. Look for small things to be grateful for each day.
- Routines. This includes bathing, cooking, and bedtime schedules.
- Exercise. This can be stretching, a short walk or dancing in your house.
- Our outlook. What we consume online and who we talk with can influence our mindset. Looking for normalcy and taking a break from COVID-19 conversations can be healthy.

Be mindful not to over-identify with thoughts & feelings. It's easy to let your mind run away with fears and concerns. It's ok to feel sad and angry, but don't stay in that place too long. Allow yourself 5-10 minutes to let it out - by writing, talking, or crying. Then focus on something else.

Look for small ways you can help someone else. This could be with a letter, text or call to check in with someone. Even though we are physically isolated, connecting with others is still possible and important.

It's a very difficult time. But, remember that this is temporary. Life will return to a form of normal at some point. You are strong, and you have made it through many other challenges.

Be gentle with yourself. Give yourself as much compassion as you give to others. Find some music that makes you smile. Sing out loud. If you're alone, sing LOUDLY. It boosts your spirits and it's good to feel goofy right now.

Lastly, you WILL get through this. You are resilient. *And remember better days are ahead.*