



COVID-19

FEELING OVERWHELMED?

In a world where we have information pouring through multiple digital channels on a 24/7 basis, it's easy to get overwhelmed – especially at a time of monumental change due to COVID-19. But there are always ways to get help.

From daily government updates to the constant shifting of work and home life routines, feeling overwhelmed is something many of us have felt in recent months. As we turn to our smart phones and the internet for solutions, we could easily be making things even harder for ourselves. “We have to deal with this global situation that is so new to us, so our natural response is to go and seek information,” explains Dr Joyce Chao, Clinical Psychologist, Dimension Centre of Hong Kong. “And we are pushed to stay on, we have the technology that hooks us into staying ‘on’ all the time, but it’s very important that we monitor the kind of information that comes to us and we have to learn how to process it.

“The information we consume might affect how we think about ourselves and others, so we have to do some sort of cleaning once in a while to make sure the things we take in are going to be useful, helpful are good for our mental health and well-being.”

It's not just information overload that's the problem. Job uncertainty, child security, vulnerable family members are also among the reasons for feeling overwhelmed.

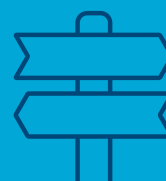
“If you're constantly bombarded with information, and all different inputs

from other aspects of all your life – family, work, things that are happening around you – you do become more distracted, you are more stressed, mentally taxed,” explains Dr Ethan Lim, Medical Director, Cigna Singapore. “That's when you run into the danger of having this overwhelmed situation where you feel like you cannot cope anymore because this is not something within your current experience, that you are able to manage. This can really push people to the limit.”

Certain groups are also more at risk than others, as Dr Chao explains: “Those that are living alone, young people, and people who already have very high stress, high pressure jobs are at risk.

“The elderly also because of isolation, and not always being efficient in using technology, and then you have those with young families which can be very challenging.

“When you have families that are studying, working and living together 24/7 under the same roof – and without privacy or able to escape one another's



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Useful resources

- Wellness apps
- Mindfulness & meditation apps
- Company resources, such as EAP

habits – sometimes problems get amplified because our tolerance levels are reduced. We don't have space to de-stress, so our own wellness and self-care routines are disrupted.

"These are the groups we have to watch out for, to pay attention to, and give the support and help they need."

But how do we spot when someone we care about is feeling overwhelmed? "Very commonly we think about people who are unable to sleep, who aren't eating well, are moody," says Dr Lim. "There could also be problems with digestion, stomach problems, skin problems are very common, due to immunity – so there might be more acne or a rash all over the body. It means the body is not coping well – mental stress places a huge burden on physical body as well, and it appears in a lot of the manifestations.

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Before that, start with yourself. "It's very important we do the self-check first," says Dr Chao. "What is our level of stress? Then we are better prepared to help the people around us and build a connection that is open and one of mutual support – you don't have to check-in for a day, it might just be half an hour."

There are many things you can do when you want to check-in on someone, it could be as simple as asking them how they are. "You can start off with something about work, school, friends and relationship, then lead into more specific things you want to check-in on," says Dr Lim. "There are a lot of tools that can help too, from health solutions apps like the Cigna wellness app, to just picking up the phone. We've got all these things at our disposal, we just need to find ways to help ourselves a little bit more."

If you'd like to find out more about how to check-in on friends, family or colleagues or just discover new ways to help manage your own stress care, watch the video below.

[Watch the video here](#)



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Together, all the way.®



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