

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Five Tips for Coping with Bad News from Around the World

Do you sometimes feel overwhelmed by all the bad news you read about online and hear about on the radio and television? Round-the-clock news has never been so easy to access as it is today. It's important to be informed, but being exposed to so much bad news isn't good for your mental health.

Research shows that people who are exposed to negative news, even when it doesn't directly impact them, can develop symptoms of psychological stress. Are you finding yourself sad or anxious about all the tragedies you hear and read about? Fortunately, there are things you can do to lessen their impact.

Tips for constructively dealing with bad news

- **Take a break from the news -** It's good to be informed but don't become a news junkie. Limit the amount of time you spend following the news, watching news videos and reading about world events. Get the facts and turn your attention to other things. Set aside a designated time daily for reading the news and limit it to that. Focusing too much on negative events leads to a sense of helplessness that carries over to other parts of your life. It can also lead to a sense of discouragement and hopelessness. There's no need to hide from the news, but don't make it the focus of your day. If you do, you risk letting negativity take control.

- **Balance negative news with good news -** Why do the media focus so much on bad news? News agencies are concerned with attracting and keeping an audience so they can sell advertizing. Unfortunately, bad news attracts more attention than good news - and it keeps people coming back for updates. Many people are drawn to bad news and tragedy even when it causes them stress; you don't have to be one of them! Seek out sites online with inspirational stories to keep things in balance. There *is* good news in the world, but mainstream media sources don't always focus on it. After digesting the day's bad news, find an inspiring story online and share them with others. You may give someone else's day a lift too. Keep your life balanced by reading about what's good in the world.

- **Do something to help others in times of tragedy -** If a particular news story touches you, ask what you can do to help. You may be able to send a donation to help the victims or their families. We often feel powerless in the wake of tragedy, but taking action reduces that sense of helplessness – and helps others too.

- **Alleviate stress and talk about it -** If something in the news deeply disturbs you, talk about it with someone you trust or write an online post about how the news impacted you. Getting your feelings out in the open is therapeutic and helps to alleviate stress. If you don't want to go public, write it down in a journal.

- **Be a force for positive change -** You can't change all the bad things that are happening in the world, but you can help out in a small way by volunteering for a good cause. For example, if you read stories about elderly neglect that deeply disturbs you, take action by volunteering at a local nursing home or offer your services to another group that caters to the needs of the elderly. It's another way to feel less helpless in the face of bad news and have a positive impact at the same time.

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To avoid bad news is to lose perspective and balance it with uplifting, inspirational stories. You have control over how much bad news you digest in a day, so try not to focus only on the bad. When you feel impassioned by a story or a particular cause, ask if there's anything you can do to help – then take action.