



Coping with Crisis in the Media (Part 1)

The news can be full of stories about unexpected or bad things like natural disasters, disease threats, bombings, kidnappings and war. In relation to COVID-19, it is very difficult not to be bombarded with worst case scenarios. All forms of news are consistently talking about it - on your phone, TV, the newspaper e.t.c.

The scary thing is that it may seem like this disease is happening all around you, even in places where you feel secure - like your university campus, shopping centres and at home. Seeing the constant stories on TV or even experiencing stories of them firsthand cause you to feel uncertain, worried or scared. These feelings may last even after the event is over.

Here are some tips to understanding the news and what you see and hear:

- ❖ **The news doesn't talk about everyday activities.** Instead, the news talks about things that are out of the ordinary - both good and bad. Sometimes it seems like the news captures more of the bad stuff - things like tragedies and crime. For example, if a plane crashes, it will get a lot of attention in the news - so much so, that you may think planes crash all the time. In fact, thousands of planes take off and land safely each day - the news just doesn't talk about those.
- ❖ **Sometimes you see stories over and over** about tragic events like bombings, or disasters such as floods or earthquakes. This doesn't mean these things are happening all the time - it just means that the news is talking about it again. The news will cover something when it first happens and then repeat the story. You may see it on the news in the morning and then again at night. After the first day, the news may do what is called a *follow-up story* to tell you what happened after the event. Therefore, you may hear about the same thing for a few days, even though it only happened once.
 - Although COVID-19 is an on-going event, there is a plethora of news stories on past events as well. Stories are repeated, altered slightly and republished. Old information can be detrimental so try to stay up to date on new occurrences and announcements
- ❖ **Bad things in the news can alert you to what is going on around you.** For example, a news story could tell you about someone in your community who is breaking into homes. While this may scare you, just remember that even though it's on the news, that doesn't mean it will happen to you. Stories like this can help make you aware of your surroundings and of things you can do to protect yourself (like locking your doors).
 - **In the case of COVID-19**, this is things like washing your hands, looking after those around you, and not hoarding in shopping centres are all

important to stay up to date on. Listen to advice from professionals on how best to slow down the spread.

- ❖ **Disasters or tragic events can bring out the best in people.** Firefighters, police officers and healthcare workers are doing their jobs (like saving people), and volunteers and everyday citizens also are there to help. You will see people in your community volunteering to bring food and clothing to help those who are affected, families coming together to help each other out and shelters being put into place to give people a place to stay. You can get involved too!

It is normal to be concerned about what you hear in the news. However, it is important to know that while things may seem uncertain for a while, your life usually will return to normal fairly soon.

If you have questions about any of the information included in the above factsheet or feel overwhelmed or stressed, please contact the 24/7 Veretis EAP line to speak to our team at 1300 878 379.



** Veretis provides mental health and counselling support. The general information provided is in regard to how best to look after yourself mentally. It does not provide the reader with specific direction, advice, or recommendations. For medical advice please consult a medical health provider and government policies.

Additional Information retrieved from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, BAM! Body and Mind (Updated 2015, 9 May). *News you can use* [Global Edit]. Retrieved 22 April 2019 from <https://www.cdc.gov>