

### HOPE TO COPE! Tips for Caregivers Coping with Covid-19

#### Be prepared:

- Stay informed while also limiting media – refer to reliable sources
- Practice hand hygiene, cough etiquette, and regularly disinfect common areas
- Keep immune system strong – eat well, sleep well, take vitamins, drink water, get fresh air where possible; even if it is by opening a window

#### Anticipate and address stress reactions:

- Normalize, empathize and validate feelings
- Be wary of increased substance use
- Reduce potential conflict, blame, shame and stigma – seek to understand rather than judge – believe that we are all doing the best that we can
- Realize the situation is temporary – that this too will pass & the majority of people will be okay
- Remember we are resilient – we have overcome adversity in the past and we will recover

#### Reduce stress:

- As much as possible, maintain your routine and keep schedules consistent – ask how can you still do these things albeit differently
- Shift expectations and priorities
- Make lists and check things off
- Set boundaries – strive for work, life, balance
- Take breaks; especially media breaks!
- Recognize those things within your control and choices you can make (hint: we only have power over ourselves and our reactions/responses!)
- Meet basic needs – attend to personal hygiene
- Be mindful of self-care
- Practice relaxation by slowing down your breathing and scheduling “nothing time”
- Exercise

#### Practice “physical distancing” rather than “social distancing”

- Use virtual means to connect with friends, family, colleagues, other supports
- Schedule regular check-ins with others
- Are you living with people or pets? – hug them! Hug a teddy bear! Give yourself some self-love!

#### Focus on the positive and what you *can* do:

- Honour others’ contributions to improving the situation, positive news stories, look for the good
- Practice gratitude
- Discover meaningful activities – there are many options on-line!
- Find ways to practice creativity
- Discover fun, enjoyable, uplifting distractions and activities
- Read inspirational material, affirmations