

MINES & ASSOCIATES Pandemic Fatigue



The vaccine is finally here and it can be tempting to let your guard down. The zoom happy hours and fun around working from home has lost its notoriety for many. Physical distancing and mask-wearing are taking a toll on us and for good reason - It's been a long nearly 10 months!

What exactly is pandemic fatigue? How do we combat it?

Pandemic fatigue is the feeling of exhaustion! The pure exhaustion from the impact that the pandemic has had on our lives. We have had to quarantine, constantly assess the safety and our levels of comfort with activities, concern about losing jobs, and have lived much of the year without a sense of when the end is coming. Feelings of helplessness and of being mentally and physically exhausted can lead to your reserves lowering. Your motivation to engage in proactive stress management and resilience can also be compromised. Here are some symptoms to be aware of:

1. You are getting sleep and yet you still feel exhausted.
2. You might be drinking more alcohol and/or eating more food.
3. You are having trouble focusing and/or concentrating.
4. You might feel irritable in situations that you typically find to be no big deal.
5. You might be loosening up on handwashing, social distancing, and even mask-wearing.

Do you think you might be experiencing a bit of pandemic fatigue? If so, here are some tips to fight back!

1. The end is in sight! Do you remember finals time in school? There is a parallel! In school, we likely made several sacrifices in the weeks before finals such as pulling all-nighters, sacrificing social gatherings, and all of this to hopefully be ready for finals. We could muster up hidden energy reserves and rally because we knew after finals was a much needed break, perhaps holiday or summer vacation. This virus is in the "finals" period, the spread is still occurring and, in some places, more so... the vaccine is in the process though. We need to make a few more sacrifices, it's wearing no doubt, but the end is in-sight! The vaccine is here...
2. Accept your feelings. You have been through A LOT in 2020. This has been a hard time with so many unknowns, so much out of your control. It is ok to be sad, depleted, angry, overwhelmed, hopeless, and any other feelings you may have. Awareness and acknowledgment is powerful. Check-in with yourself, sit with your feelings, reflect on them.
3. Watch out for confirmation bias! Perhaps you have made it this far and have not been sick or you have put yourself in situations that have been ill-advised and have not had an adverse outcome... It can be easy to rationalize that you have done it before and been fine, you can do it again. Be mindful and clear of loosening your boundaries and standards.

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4. Prioritize self-care! Your health and wellbeing (including mental) need to come first. Self-care can include many aspects including:
- Exercise! Even a short walk makes a difference!
 - Meditation and deep breathing. This is such a powerful skill to build and does not have to be a big endeavor. Even something as simple as closing your eyes and focusing on your breath or breathing to center can be impactful when you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed.
 - Connecting with positive friends and loved ones in safe ways (just the act of reaching out can boost your mood and happiness).
 - Monitor your social media habits (be mindful of **doomscrolling**).
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MINES is here for you!

We're here to help! If you are experiencing any stress, anxiety, burnout, trouble focusing on wellbeing, or any other day to day issues that may be impacting your health and wellbeing (or just want to talk to someone), please remember MINES counselors are experienced and available. We offer free and confidential counseling with licensed mental health professionals via telephone, video, and online text/message-based platforms. You may also have access to legal and financial benefits, wellness coaching, work/life balance service, smoking cessation, and parental coaching services.

The EAP is available 24/7 at 800-873-7138 or visit www.minesandassociates.com

For more resources related to COVID-19 and remote working please click [here](#).

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