Long COVID
& Mental Health

We often think of Long COVID's physical symptoms but mental health struggles can make living with Long COVID even harder. Depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbances can be more common for people with Long COVID. Some people with Long COVID may even experience post-traumatic stress symptoms.

Why? Long COVID can strain your mental health for many reasons including…

1. **Adjusting to a new normal.** Being unable to go back to your "normal" life or struggling to keep up because of ongoing unexplained symptoms is stressful.

2. **Dealing with fatigue.** Fatigue can keep you from doing what you enjoy.

3. **Social isolation.** Long COVID can make it hard to stay connected. Lower energy, chronic pain or trying to avoid reinfection or making symptoms worse can get in the way of connecting.

4. **Not being believed.** Sadly, many people suffering from Long COVID have had their symptoms wrongly ignored by healthcare providers, family, or friends.

5. **The COVID-19 virus's impact on the brain.** Researchers are still figuring out how COVID-19 impacts the brain. Current research says the virus can up your risk for mental health challenges.

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Long COVID and mental health struggles can overlap. Both are real and deserve attention! Long COVID is NOT "All in your head" but, taking care of your mental health can help you cope with Long COVID AND managing your Long COVID can help your mental health.

The first step in taking care of your mental is knowing what to look out for. Be on the lookout for these signs in yourself and your loved ones...

Sadness that doesn't seem to go away

Not being able to experience pleasure

Being unable to control or stop worrying

Repeated negative thoughts about yourself

Often feeling tense, on guard, or on edge

Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy

Feeling numb

Changes in appetite, over or under eating

Thoughts of harming yourself or others

Trouble sleeping

Difficulty thinking or concentrating

Increased use of alcohol or other drugs

Small changes can help your mental health. Try...

Building a daily routine

Setting small goals for yourself

Keeping a journal

Practicing meditation or mindfulness

Breathing exercises

Making time to do things you enjoy

Eating a healthy diet

Reducing your use of alcohol or other drugs

Reducing caffeine intake (if experiencing anxiety)

Joining a support group or talking a trusted loved one

A quick word of advice: "Do not compare yourself to someone else living with Long COVID. The ways in which you recover belong uniquely to you. However, that does not mean that you are alone. Reach out to someone, anyone! And start taking control of your health and wellbeing."

-Victoria Haight, Social Worker, Care and Recovery After COVID-19 (CARE) Clinic

Sources

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