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THE LIST: How to relieve stress and anxiety amidst war and global conflict

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Dr. Anthony Esposito, a professor in the Communication Studies department at Edinboro University, gave his insight on the Russo Ukrainian War: “The global community is backing the Ukraine people and their president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Therefore, because of sanctions against Russia by NATO, impacting their already unstable economy and adversely impeding the lives of the Russian populace, the world is rallying behind the Ukrainian people. Furthermore, the sanctions negatively affect Russia's oligarchy, hopefully compelling Putin to discontinue this heinous invasion.”

Here are some ways to feel better right now, and to feel okay after a little while:

1. Don't lose hope. It might be hard to feel hopeful right now, but having hope will help build resistance and make recovery from these uncertain times easier. The Newport Academy, a therapy program for adolescents with mental health or addiction issues, states that keeping hope will lessen depression, make a protective factor against suicidal ideation, stop self-deprecatory thinking, and assist in engaging in healthy behavior. A few tips for fostering more hope are limit media exposure (can filter out certain words or just set a time limit per day), try looking at the situation in a different light, and spend time with optimistic people.
2. Be grateful for what you have, including your family, friends, a roof over your head, safety, clean air and water. Some people in the world have none of that right now, especially the Ukrainian citizens.
3. Look at the heroes that are rising. The school walkouts down in Florida by high school students to protest the Don't Say Gay bill or Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the citizens of Ukraine relentlessly fighting back. Looking at these people brings about a sense of hope in uncertain times. They're not giving up despite how bad the world is treating them – they're fighting back with everything they can to protect themselves and their homes. If they aren't giving up, you shouldn't either because there is possibility for growth.
4. Enjoy the weather outside – sunshine is known to boost serotonin, which is known as the mood and behavior stabilizer. It might seem minimal to take a walk in the sun or just



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5. Don't avoid or ignore what is happening – it is hard to listen to, but it is there and it is real. Avoidance will lead to a build-up of negative emotions, which can be dangerous. It could lead to further anxiety and depression, instances of lashing out, lower self-esteem and damage to relationships. Take a few minutes each day to catch up on current events – try this with a trusted person who can make you feel safe and help you cope afterward.

6. Use the technique of Escapism. The American Psychology Association defines escapism as “the tendency to escape from the real world to the safety and comfort of a fantasy world.” It is a type of coping strategy. However, this suggestion should be taken with a grain of salt. No matter what, don't escape into drugs or alcohol because those will lead to worse situations (such as addiction). Instead, use positive escapism without completely avoiding the world. Avoiding situations altogether can be detrimental to mental health. Positive escapism can be books, exercising, music, video games, gardening, or pretty much anything to take someone's mind elsewhere, hence the term escaping.

At the end of the day, there are always resources to reach out to and seek further help if nothing else works. These techniques are great, but professionals are everywhere, ready to assist in healing and comfort.

Edinboro University offer a variety of [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) for students. There you can find counseling, education programs, and support groups.

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