

## Mental Health Tips for Business Owners During COVID-19

During this global pandemic, we want to encourage you not only take care of your physical health, but your mental health as well. New policies, business closures, decreases in revenue, and more can all cause stress and have a negative impact on your mental wellbeing. To help protect your mental health during these uncertain times, we have compiled a list of tips and resources focused on reducing stress and anxiety.

1. **Don't Be Afraid To Ask For Help** – One of the reasons dealing with this pandemic can be so stressful is because we don't know what the right answers are yet because something like this has never happened before. Now is the time where we need to lean on each other and help everyone get through this together. If you are struggling with a decision or a task or just struggling in general, don't be afraid to reach out to others to ask for their advice or help. Help can come from your employees, your family, your neighbors, other similar businesses, and your city.
2. **Don't Procrastinate** – Feelings of stress and anxiety can quickly feel overwhelming and make it difficult to make some of the hard decisions you will need to make in the next few weeks. However, decisions need to be made and plans need to be put in place and the longer you put these things off, the more stress and anxiety you will feel. If you are struggling to start, make a list of the things that need to get done. Then, either check off a few easy tasks to get the ball rolling, or work on a big task to help decrease your stress. A check-list of what your business can do to prepare can be found [here](#), along with [20 tips](#) for business preparedness.
3. **But Don't Make Decisions Too Quickly** – Hard decisions are going to have to be made, like deciding whether to stay open or temporarily close, but you don't want to make decisions like that quickly just to get them checked off. Take a hard look at your finances, talk to your employees, and see what other similar businesses are doing before you make your decision. These decisions are not going to just effect you right now, but they can also potentially affect you for weeks or months in the future, so try to make your decisions as calmly and rationally as possible. If you are thinking about closing your business, or preparing to re-open it, watch this [video](#) for tips and guidance.
4. **Control What You Can, Let Go Of What You Can't** – Lack of control, especially at a time like this, can definitely cause stress and anxiety. The important thing to figure out for your stress is what you can control and what you cannot control. Then, focus your energy and time on the things you can control. For the things you cannot control, do your best to not worry about those things because it will only serve to escalate your stress. For example, if you are a restaurant owner, the governor shutting down dine-in service is something you cannot control that is very stressful. However, worrying about the decision and wishing you could change it won't help your stress or improve your situation. Focusing on what you can control, like getting together and promoting a to-go service, will help.
5. **Take Advantage of Your Free Time** – There is usually always a silver lining in any bad situation, and in this bad situation, your silver lining could be free time. Most of us have

that list of work to-dos that we just never seem to have time to tackle and never would get time to address during our normal, busy work schedules. Instead of using your new free time to stress about business not going as normal, you can take advantage of this time to check some things off your list. If you don't have a to-do list ready, a deep clean of your business would be a great place to start. If you need more examples, [these articles](#) about what businesses can do during slow times could have some ideas that you can use for your own business.

6. **Take Advantage of Your Employees' Free Time** – If you're struggling to find ways to give your employees hours, you can apply the same idea from #5 to their new free time. Schedule them to help assist with any cleaning, organization, or other tasks around the business. If your business requires employees to have any special training or certifications, now is a great time to have them work on those or even take extra trainings to increase their skills and knowledge. For those retail businesses that are still open, here are [some ideas](#) for keeping staff busy while walk-in business is slow.
7. **Take Some Time For Yourself** – In times of high-stress and uncertainty, you need to be calm, collected, and focused. But, times of high-stress and uncertainty, and all the extra work you may be doing right now to stay afloat, can also quickly run you down. Taking a break from work, even if it is just a couple of minutes, can have a significant positive impact on your mental health and help you better function during this crisis. Some examples of ways you can take some time for yourself from Psychology Today can be found [here](#).

For more information about staying mentally healthy and managing stress, check out the resources below.

>> [CDC's Guide to Manage Anxiety & Stress](#)

>> [Article on 10 Ways to Ease Anxiety from the New York Times](#)

>> [Article on Being Mindful of Your Mental Health from Healthline](#)

>> [Article on Stress about COVID-19 from John Hopkins Medicine](#)