



Stressed at the state of the world? Here's how to cope

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Between the war in Ukraine, the pandemic, and the ongoing inquiry into the mass shooting in Nova Scotia, some Maritimers are feeling anxious — and data suggests they're not alone.

According to a national survey from the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), 64 per cent of respondents say they're stressed about COVID-19 and its variants, 37 per cent say their mental health has declined, and 38 per cent report feeling angry.

"Uncertainty I think in many ways creates a lack of grounding almost underneath our feet," says Nick Cardone, a registered counselling therapist in Halifax.

"It's hard to step forward when you're standing on sand as opposed to concrete."

Cardone says focusing on things that make us feel present is a good way to deal with stress.

"If we are very intentional of planning our days and our weeks around the people, places and activities that can ground us, then some of the crappy impacts that these realities in our world naturally have on us — they're mitigated."

When it comes to consuming information, experts say you should try to set boundaries.

"At one point, it used to be just the television, and now it's social media, it's email, it's the conversations we're having everywhere. So that's a lot for us to process, and so by limiting it, it allows us to process it in a more natural way," said Karn Nichols, executive director of the Nova Scotia CMHA.

"As individuals, as human beings, we are capable of dealing with stress, but I think it's the chronic stress that makes things a little more difficult."

As for how to deal with that chronic stress from events both at home and abroad, psychologist Simon Sherry says thinking realistically is important.

“You can think catastrophically and overestimate the negatives in a time and place like this,” said Sherry.

“Think rationally and respond proportionally, even when things are dark, it’s important not to blow things up in your mind beyond the current evidence that is available.”