Understanding & Coping with Trauma

The stress of the COVID-19 pandemic can trigger our brain’s threat system, causing a "fight-or-flight" response. Taking the following steps can help us better cope with this automatic reaction.

1. Calm your threat system.
   - Take a break as soon as you can when you feel overwhelmed
   - Calm yourself by taking deep breaths
   - Come into the present moment using your 5 senses: what can you see, hear, feel, smell, or taste

2. Strengthen social supports.
   - Reach out to your family, friends, and colleagues to help create a strong social network
   - Sharing our fears and worries with others can help us develop a sense of connection and belonging

3. Care for yourself and seek help if needed.
   - It is normal to feel fear, anger, and anxiety in response to extreme stress such as the COVID-19 pandemic
   - Practice being kind to yourself and caring for your needs
   - Seek help from mental health support programs if needed

Sources: Psychology Today (link)
Traumatic Stress Institute (link)