

Coping During COVID-19



For some people, the outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus) may cause high levels of stress and anxiety. High levels of stress can take a toll on both physical and mental health. This sheet provides information on common reactions, ways to cope, and how to seek help during the current pandemic.

COMMON REACTIONS

Worry or fear about individual, family, and/or community health. Caregivers may worry about how they will stock up on groceries, cleaning supplies, and other personal care items. Children, especially those under the age of 5, may not understand the outbreak but become nervous or start feeling afraid because of the emotions of people around them.

Loneliness, feelings of isolation and boredom from being cut off from others. Much of our daily routine involve close interaction with others (school, work, going to the barbershop, etc.). With many of those places not accessible it may feel harder to remain connected to others around you. Children may express missing their friends, activities, and other social spaces.

Confusion about the outbreak and what the myths and realities are. With the constant stream of new and changing information, caregivers may find themselves feeling confused and overwhelmed by the amount of information.

Depressive feelings such as sadness, hopelessness, fatigue, and/or trouble sleeping. Caregivers may feel overwhelmed and start to feel as though there is nothing they can do to protect themselves and their families. Children may express feeling “down” or have unexplained pains such as stomach aches and headaches.



WAYS TO COPE AND CARE FOR EACH OTHER

Create a daily routine. Get up, get dressed, and prepare for the day. Ready your body in a similar way to how you would normally prepare for the work or school day. This prepares you mentally for a new day and wakes up your brain.

Unplug from the coverage. Limit your family’s exposure to news coverage and distressing images, including social media apps. With the amount of information available it is easy to become overwhelmed; children may misinterpret information leading to more fear. Use good sources to stay informed but be aware of when you start to feel overwhelmed or have been “surfing” for long-periods of time.

RESOURCES

Free COVID-19 Screening provided by Spectrum Health:
1-833-559-0659

Community Resources:
2-1-1

National Suicide Prevention Hotline:

1-800-273-TALK
1-800-273-8255

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration’s (SAMHSA’s)

Disaster Distress Helpline:

1-800-985-5990 or
text TalkWithUs to 66746.
(TTY 1-800-846-8517)

If you or someone you know is experiencing severe or life-threatening symptoms, call 9-1-1

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Realistic Expectations. Whether as a caregiver who is now working from home, or a student who is trying to complete schoolwork at home, try to have realistic expectations. You're in a different environment dealing with a challenging time. Caregivers and children may, work slower; need more breaks; need to work in different hourly chunks. All of that is ok.



Connect with others. While we practice social distancing and keep out of close physical contact there are many other ways to connect. Take time to talk with children, listen to one another, and spend time doing positive activities. Keep in contact with loved one's outside of the home through things like phone calls, video chats, text messaging, or even writing a letter.

Cut down on caffeine, alcohol, and sugar. Increased caffeine, alcohol, and sugar can not only impact your physical health, they impact your mental health as well. Sleepy? Take a nap. Feeling low? Talk to someone about something, someone, some place that brings you happiness.

Extend grace. Learning, decision making, and memory are all impacted by high levels of stress. Remember, everyone is trying their best and compassion will help us all get through this together.

SEEKING HELP

Contact your insurance provider to learn more about your coverage and providers in your area. Many insurance providers have extended coverage to include telehealth (virtual) visits.



Riverwood Center: 24/7 line answered by a live person 269-925-0585 or 800-336-0341.

Woodlands Behavioral Health 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 269-445-2451 or 800-323-0335.

For local help with **substance treatment services** contact Carol's Hope at 269-556-1526

FREE wellness apps such as Headspace and ichillapp.com to practice skills of wellness.

Other resources for **finding a mental health provider** include www.betterhelp.com and www.psychologytoday.com

To **confidentially get connected** to community resources such as food programs, shelter and housing, and safe paths out of physical and/or emotional abuse, call 2-1-1 or text your zip code to 898-211

REFERENCES

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