



HOW TO MANAGE Stress & Anxiety DURING COVID-19

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

COPING WITH STRESS WILL MAKE YOU, THE PEOPLE YOU CARE ABOUT, AND YOUR COMMUNITY STRONGER. HERE'S HOW...

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- Identify your support systems.
- Be sure that you are eating well and getting enough sleep.
- Spend time doing things that bring you joy- reading a book, playing a game, listening to music, etc.
- Take time to pause and remember the things for which you are grateful.
- Take breaks and turn off the media coverage to avoid inundating yourself with information.

TAKE CARE OF OTHERS

- Share the facts about COVID-19. Understanding the actual risk to yourself and people you care about can make an outbreak less stressful. It also helps stop the spread of myths about the virus. For accurate information, visit the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) or the World Health Organization (WHO). Social distancing does not mean social isolation, especially with the modern technologies that are available to many of us.
- Reach out to others and stay connected with those close to you via phone or social media, especially those that are vulnerable to the virus, those struggling with mental health or substance use issues, or those that are in self-quarantine.
- Take time to connect with others about other facets of life unrelated to COVID-19 and celebrate and find positive moments.

TAKE CARE OF CHILDREN & YOUTH

- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is okay if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Limit your family's exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members outside of the house via social media, FaceTime, Skype, or talking on the phone.

FOR RESPONDERS

Responding to COVID-19 can take an emotional toll on you. There are things you can do to reduce secondary traumatic stress (STS) reactions:

- Acknowledge that STS can impact anyone helping families after a traumatic event.
- Learn the symptoms including physical (e.g., fatigue, illness) and mental (e.g., fear, withdrawal, guilt).
- Allow time for you and your family to recover from responding to the pandemic.
- Create a menu of personal self-care activities that you enjoy, such as talking to or chatting with friends and family (if only remotely), exercising, or reading a book.
- Take a break from media coverage of COVID-19.
- Ask for help if you feel overwhelmed or concerned that COVID-19 is affecting your ability to care for your family and patients as you did before the outbreak.



When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'

FRED ROGERS