



MANAGING STRESS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

The Coronavirus outbreak has caused fear and panic for many. Here are some ways to stay safe and manage stress during this uncertain time.



For Everyone:

- Practice good hygiene and plan ahead in case your routine is disrupted.
- Monitor your stress levels. If you experience major changes in your energy level, eating/sleeping patterns or ability to concentrate or have thoughts of self-injury or suicide, seek help at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or text **Got5** to **741741**.
- Choose a few trusted news sources and only check them once or twice a day.
- Exercise eat healthy foods and get a good night's sleep. Avoid staying up late to monitor the news.
- Virtually reach out to different types of support networks, like family, friends, colleagues, faith-based communities and social organizations. Try to avoid isolation.
- Keep busy by finding ways to help others, and focus on other things, like movies or TV shows.
- Start a gratitude journal or talk nightly with your family about fun or enjoyable moments of the day.
- Grounding exercises, sensory modulation, and deep breathing may be helpful for some people.

For Those Receiving Mental Health Services:

- As soon as possible, work with a mental health provider on a coping plan. Come up with specific ways to manage stress and develop alternative options if routine services are disrupted.
- Seek positive peer support, whether done directly or through online peer support or peer hotlines.

For Parents:

- Rehearse scripts for talking with your kids about COVID-19. Use resources and media to help prepare.
- Talk about the situation openly, and answer questions your child asks but don't give more information than requested. Reassure your child that it is normal to feel scared or anxious.
- Limit information flow about the outbreak and consider watching the news with your child.
- Keep as many routines intact as possible and set up a schedule for students who are home from school.
- Find fun ways to maintain contact with elderly grandparents, school classmates or others using video calls, letters, postcards or other means.
- Encourage exercise and time outside and consider teaching purposeful breathing or distraction skills.

For Caregivers:

- Help individuals maintain social connections, whether through phone calls or newer technology, and find ways they can help others, like making check-in calls or entertaining grandchildren on FaceTime.
- Encourage individuals to stay active and help them select reliable sources to get coronavirus updates.
- Consider practical ways to help limit anxiety, like volunteering to order the person's groceries online or offering to walk the dog.
- Take care of yourself, as being a caregiver during uncertain times can be particularly stressful.

For Mental Health Providers:

- Prioritize self-care. Get adequate rest and exercise, eat healthy and maintain connections.
- Prepare for heightened anxiety in clients and work with colleagues to prepare crisis management plans.
- Set up peer supports to connect clients with others who are in a similar situation-