



## RSBCIHI Behavioral Health Services Bulletin: Managing Stress, Depression & Anxiety During the COVID-19 Pandemic

“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. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.”<sup>1</sup>

**Everyone responds to stress differently.** There may be many levels of stress that is experienced due to the COVID-19 Outbreak. Some factors that may increase stress levels include:

- “Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19,
- Children and teens,
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders,
- People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use”<sup>1</sup>



Stressful situations can increase the feelings of anxiety and depression due to increased fear, worry, or isolation. There are many creative ways of reducing anxiety and depression, even during times of social distancing and self-isolation. Here are some tips to engage in enjoyable activities while adhering to COVID-19 pandemic advisories:

- **Exercise:** walking, gardening, or dancing.<sup>2</sup>
- **Service:** Video chat with friends and family, call elders in the community, deliver groceries to elder(s), send “thank-you cards” to “front line” workers during the pandemic <sup>2</sup>
- **Relaxation:** taking a warm bath<sup>2</sup>, practicing deep breathing<sup>4</sup>
- **Media Break:** Set a limit on media consumption, including social media, local or national news<sup>3</sup>
- **Pay Attention to Your Body, Mind, and Spirit:** Recognize your body’s stress warnings, recognize how your past experience effects today’s thoughts, renew your spirit with ritual, prayer, and service to others<sup>5</sup>
- **Rest:** Make sure to get enough sleep and rest<sup>3</sup>
- **Drink Water:** Stay hydrated and avoid excessive amounts of caffeine or alcohol<sup>3</sup>
- **Nourish Your Body:** Eat healthy foods when possible<sup>3</sup>
- **Keep a Balanced Perspective:** Although challenging, practice focusing on the good in times during times of struggle. Call the friend who makes you smile and watch the film that makes you laugh<sup>4</sup>



It is helpful to remember that everyone has their own reactions and methods of coping, and that you may have good and tough days. With some purposeful and mindful effort, you can practice skills that will boost your mood and outlook. Remember that you can do your part to wash your hands, stay home unless absolutely necessary, and encourage others to do the same. You can make a tremendous impact on your community.<sup>6</sup>

*Remember to please reach out to friends, family, and helplines.*

## Disaster Distress Helpline



**1-800-985-5990**



**TEXT: "TalkWithUs" to 66746**



**DisasterDistress.samhsa.gov**

SAMHSA

HHS.gov

**RSBCIHI Behavioral Health Services is here for you, 24/7:  
(951)782-6438**



### References

1. Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19. (2020, March 30). Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html)
2. Leyba, E. (2020, March 29). Behavioral Activation to Prevent Depression During COVID-19. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/joyful-parenting/202003/behavioral-activation-prevent-depression-during-covid-19>
3. Emotional Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Outbreak. (n.d.). Retrieved April 3, 2020, from <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/current-events/supporting-your-emotional-well-being-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>
4. CAMFT Public Service Announcement: Tips for Reducing Anxiety and Stress During the COVID-19 Coronavirus Global Pandemic.(2020, March 13). Retrieved from <https://www.camft.org/Membership/About-Us/Press-Release/california-therapists-release-public-service-vlog-on-reducing-anxiety-during-the-coronavirus>
5. Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks. (2014, October). Retrieved from <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885>
6. How to Stay Positive During the Pandemic. (2020, March 29). Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/stronger-fear/202003/how-stay-positive-during-the-pandemic>