



MENTAL HEALTH DURING ISOLATION

Updated 03/27/2020

Maintaining your mental health during isolation and personal distancing can be challenging. This is even more important when we are out of our normal routine and lack connection with our social network. The tips and resources below are designed to support you during this time.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Those with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment plans and monitor for any new symptoms
 - If you notice any changes, contact your healthcare provider right away

Ask if your provider offers virtual visits or telephonic options to address these needs with you while you are not able to be seen in their office.

SYMPTOMS TO MONITOR

- Difficulty sleeping and/or concentrating
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Fear and worrying
- Excessive crying
- Feelings of heart racing
- Excessive preparations or hoarding
- Returning to negative behaviors that were outgrown, such as bedwetting or thumb sucking
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- *For those who have experienced prior traumatizing situations, the anxiety and isolation around the viral outbreak can bring up memories of past experiences.*

TIPS TO COPE

- **Create a schedule** in order to encourage yourself to stay both mentally and physically active. This will also provide you with something to look forward to!
- When bored, be careful to manage alcohol consumption, vaping, and over-eating – these are habits that can be hard to break.
- **Connecting with others** about your concerns and how you're feeling will allow those feelings to surface and will provide you with a sounding board for them. (See the Resources section below for support)
- Practice anxiety management **breathing techniques**, such as 4-7-8 breathing
 - To start, put one hand on your belly and the other on your chest as in the belly breathing exercise
 - Take a deep, slow breath from your belly, and silently count to 4 as you breath in
 - Hold your breath, and silently count from 1 to 7
 - Breath out completely as you count from 1 to 8. Try to get all the air out of your lungs by the time you count to 8.
 - Repeat 3 to 7 times or until you feel calm
- **Use social media to stay connected** to other people
 - *If you see posts that are causing stress, take a break by turning it off*
- **Call or facetime your friends** as opposed to only texting – this allows you to open up more with the other person and feel connected
- For those who find it therapeutic, turn to your Bible, prayer, or religion
- If you feel yourself in a panicked state or anxiety spiking, stop immediately and **USE ALL FIVE SENSES.**
 - *LOOK* around and focus on one thing in the room
 - Tune in to one *NOISE*
 - Allow one *SMELL* to fill your nose
 - Smack your tongue and notice any residue *TASTE*
 - *FEEL* your feet on the floor
 - Breathe. Repeat

TIPS FOR WORKING REMOTELY

- Create a **dedicated workspace** that's clean and free of distractions
- **Set an alarm** like a normal workday
- **Get ready** like you are going to leave the house
 - Get dressed
 - Brush or fix your hair
 - For those who wear it, do your make up – even if minimal
 - Eat breakfast
 - Brush your teeth
- Do your best to **adhere to a working schedule**
 - **Set an alarm** to remind you to take breaks
 - Consider using an app like **Time Out** to remind you to take a breather
 - **Don't forget to eat** lunch and/or healthy snacks during your breaks
- When family or children are at home with you
 - **Set expectations** of your workspace being “off-limits” to limit interruptions
 - During your breaks, spend **extra quality time** with those in your home

Virtual Resources for Mindfulness and Stress Reduction

Headspace: <https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>



“Meditation has been shown to help people stress less, focus more and even sleep better. Headspace is meditation made simple. We'll teach you the life-changing skills of meditation and mindfulness in just a few minutes a day.”

Calm:



Find Your Calm. Sleep more. Stress less. Live better.

Mindvalley: Quests & Mentoring:

Your daily coach for mindfulness, goals, gratitude, motivation and productivity.



Virtual Resources for Behavioral Health

AbleTo:



“AbleTo’s personalized programs are delivered one-on-one, privately and confidentially, with a professional therapist and coach via phone or video chat.”

Talkspace:



“Talkspace makes therapy available and affordable for all. Our mission is to provide more people with convenient access to licensed therapists who can help those in need live a happier and healthier life.”

Betterhelp:



“Making professional counseling accessible, affordable, convenient - so anyone who struggles with life’s challenges can get help, anytime, anywhere.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Disaster Distress Hotline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746

People with deafness or hearing loss can use their preferred relay service to call 1-800-985-5990

Crisis Text Line

Anxious about coronavirus? Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor.

Time Out

This downloadable application reminds you throughout the day to take a breather

REMEMBER: You are not alone. Many people are feeling anxious or fearful right now and it's strong to reach out for help.