

# LCL-PA RESOURCES FOR THE LEGAL PROFESSION DURING COVID-19

Updated April 3, 2020

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# RESOURCES FOR THE LEGAL PROFESSION DURING COVID-19

*Updated April 3, 2020*

The LCL-PA staff recognizes that the collateral effects of the current public health crisis can impact your mental health. We offer these resources to help you understand and manage potential challenges and to support your well-being and recovery. All underlined blue text represents a live website link. Simply click on the link to view the material.

## CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) INFORMATION AND UPDATES

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### [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

The CDC site is likely to offer the most up to date information on the COVID-19 virus.

### [Pennsylvania Department of Health](#)

This Pennsylvania resource is continually updated with recommendations and data.

## PERSONAL, PRACTICE MANAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP RESOURCES FOR LAWYERS

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[CLE Compliance Announcement](#): As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has extended the April 30 CLE compliance period to Aug. 31, 2020. At this time, the Supreme Court has left other compliance periods unchanged. Here is a link to the order:

**Free Lawline CLE:** [Free CLE Course: Creating A Coronavirus Response Plan: A How-To Guide for Employers](#) (Now On Demand)

### [Prioritizing in a Pandemic for Law Firms](#) (free videos from the NC Bar Association)

- [Covid-19: Awareness, Response, and Workplace Plans/Policies \(Part 1\)](#)
- [Covid-19: Law Firm Operations \(Part 2\)](#)
- [Covid-19: Serving Clients \(Part 3\)](#)

[ABA COVID-19 Mental Health Resources](#) – a comprehensive compilation of lawyer-specific practice and mental health resources

[Pennsylvania Bar Association – COVID-19 Resources Guide for Lawyers](#) – Contains court updates and connections, federal information and programs to assist small businesses, CLE resources, articles, blog posts and guidance for lawyers, legislation and governmental orders relevant to lawyers, and mental health resources

[ABA's Lawyer Well-Being Week \(May 4-8, 2020\)](#)- brought to you by the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-being - Free webinars, online activities, and other events. Check out the website [lawyerwell-being.net](#) for a wealth of information and activities you can pursue at any time.

**CLE Webinar** – [“Staying Mentally Safe, Sound and Sober during COVID-19 \[CC\]”](#)- ABA CoLAP Webinar: April 6, 2020 at 1:00 P.M. featuring Laurie Besden, Esq., LCL-PA’s Executive Director (free to ABA members/\$50 for non-members)

Global pandemics like COVID-19 put into stark relief the extraordinary stressors that you, your firm’s employee and your clients are under. How do you recognize the signs and symptoms of behavioral health disorders that can be adversely affected by the current situation? And do you have the strategies to address these? Making sure you do is part of the ethical responsibility you owe your client(s). This will be made available as an on-demand CLE presentation by April 13, 2020.

**“To Those in Recovery: You’ve Got This!”** Written by LCL-PA’s Executive Director, Laurie Besden, Esq. Posted on ABA CoLAP’s newsletter on March 27, 2020

**Harvard Law School Center on the Legal Profession March/April 2020 issue of The Practice: “Approaching Lawyer Well-Being”** – includes articles on grappling with COVID-19 and others on operational and individual lawyer wellness

**“The Leader’s Guide to Managing COVID-19 Panic”** by Jan Bruce (Forbes magazine)

**“8 Strategies to Set up Remote Work during the Coronavirus Outbreak”** by Marten Mickos

**Pandemic Preparedness Resources from the National Association of Bar Executives** - contains extensive information on the following:

- Webinar script examples
- Various platforms available for teleconferencing, electronic meetings and video conferencing
- Advice and tips for working remotely
- Articles on how to take care of yourself and your team
- Government Agency Resources
- Information about the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act)
  - [ABA Summary of 10 Highlights of the CARES Act](#)
  - [US Chamber of Commerce CARES Guide: What Small Businesses Need to Know](#)
  - [ASAE Summary of Provisions of the CARES Act Applicable to Associations and Foundations](#)

**Thomson Reuters Practical Law – Global Coronavirus Toolkit** – Contains relevant legal updates, practice notes, checklists, a multitude of relevant articles and a link to a live tally and discussion of [federal legislative responses to the coronavirus](#).

**Free Products and Resources for Legal Professionals During the Coronavirus Crisis** – A site dedicated to providing updated information about practice management, services, products, education programs and news and resources made available for free to legal professionals during the COVID-19 crisis including:

- [Free Coronavirus Page at Law 360](#) (owned by LexisNexis) with news, in-depth features and expert analysis related to Covid-19 and the law.
- [Lexis Nexis Practice Advisor](#) is also providing a free [Coronavirus Resource Kit](#)

## **HELPLINES**

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**The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** provides 24/7 free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or use their [Lifeline Web Chat](#)  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

**Crisis Text Line** serves anyone, in **any** type of crisis, providing access to free, 24/7 support and information via a medium people already use and trust: text.  
Text “HOME” to 741741  
[www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)

## **Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of Pennsylvania Lawyers Confidential Helpline**

1-888-999-1941

[www.lclpa.org](http://www.lclpa.org)

## **Judges Concerned for Judges of Pennsylvania Judges Confidential Helpline**

1-888-999-9706

[www.jcjp.org](http://www.jcjp.org)

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING & STAYING BUSY**

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**“Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation during an Infectious Disease Outbreak,”**  
published by SAMHSA - see pp. 24-27 in this document

**[“Dealing with Social Isolation”](#)** by Brian Cuban, author of “The Addicted Lawyer”

**[“100 things to do while stuck inside due to a pandemic”](#)** published by USA TODAY

**[Free Online Courses from Ivy League Schools](#)**

**[Anxious and Stressed? Yoga Comes to the Rescue with these Free Online Classes](#)**

**[9 Totally Free At-Home Workouts for When Coronavirus is Keeping You Inside](#)**

**[Coronavirus Sanity Guide](#)** – by Ten Percent Happier to help you cope with this moment of uncertainty  
and anxiety

## **STRESS, ANXIETY, GRIEF & RESILIENCE DURING THE PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS**

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**[“Stigma and Resilience”](#)** published by the CDC

**[“That Discomfort You’re Feeling is Grief”](#)** by Scott Berinato March 23, 2020 (Harvard Business Review)

**[“Mental Health and Coping during COVID-19”](#)** published by the CDC

**[“7 science-based strategies to cope with coronavirus anxiety”](#)** by Jelena Kecmanovic

**[“\[Lawyer\] Anxiety, Self-Protective Behavior, Ethical Sinkholes, and Professional Responsibility”](#)** by  
Dan Defoe

**[“Coronavirus and your Mental Health: Two Experts Explain Why We Panic and How to Cope”](#)** by  
Joanna Chiu

**[“How Do You Keep Down Your Stress Levels at the Office?”](#)** by Stephen Rynkiewicz (ABA Journal)

**“Coping with Stress during Infectious Disease Outbreaks,”** published by SAMHSA - see p. 28

**[“A 23-Minute Anxiety Practice”](#)** (Audio Guided Meditation) by Hugh Byrne

**[5 TED Talks to Help You Manage Anxiety and Build Resilience](#)** – by Betsy Mikel, Inc.com

## **MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

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CDC information about the Covid-19 virus and resources and recommendations for coping with stress and anxiety (for adults, parents, responders and caregivers) over the pandemic - [Click Here](#)

[Mental Health America: Covid 19 Information and Resources](#) ([www.mhanational.org](http://www.mhanational.org)) – contains a wealth of information and resources regarding the following topics relevant to the public health emergency: mental health information for disease outbreaks, financial support, tools and information on anxiety, tools to connect with others. It also includes comprehensive resources for caregivers, parents, older adults, domestic violence survivors, veterans and LGBTQ+ individuals

[Anxiety Tool Kit: Mindfulness Practices to Aid Well-Being in Trying Times](#) by Jon Krop, Esq. (You Tube video)

[“Taking Care of Your Mental Health in the Face of Uncertainty.”](#) published by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

[Social Isolation and Mental Health during COVID-19](#) – by the Jason Foundation, which is dedicated to the prevention of youth suicide

[Mindfulness in Law Society’s](#) - free online resources

[How the Wisdom of 12-Step Programs Can Help Get Us through April - Seven practices to help you navigate quarantine](#)

### **Free Resources from National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):**

[NAMI Helpline Covid-19 \(Coronavirus\) Information and Resources](#) Guide – comprehensive guide to dealing with the public health crisis while protecting and supporting your mental health

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offers these [tips for people with mental illness](#).

### **Free General Mental Health Support Virtual Meetings and Resources from the Pennsylvania Chapters of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)**

- Daily schedule of free Zoom online and video conference meetings available through [NAMI of Bucks county](#)
- Online meetings and resources available through [NAMI of Montgomery county](#)
  - Free YouTube webinar on [Supporting Your Loved One with Mental Illness During the COVID-19 Isolation](#)
  - [Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy: Suspiciousness and Paranoia During Isolation](#) (PowerPoint presentation)
  - [NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups](#): This is the zoom link for ALL live online connection groups: <https://zoom.us/j/459376426> or dial in option: 1-929-205-6099 [meeting ID 459 376 426](#)

**[NAMI Live Online \(Zoom\) Family Support Groups Meeting Schedule](#)** to join online click here: <https://zoom.us/j/462164157> or to join via phone dial 1-929-205-6099 and enter meeting ID 462 164 157

- **[NAMI of Lehigh Valley](#)**: register for free online and video conferencing meetings by calling 610-882-2102 or email [info@nami-lv.org](mailto:info@nami-lv.org)
- **[NAMI of Scranton & Northeast Region](#)**- free online Zoom meetings- get the schedule and access information by clicking [Here](#)
- NAMI Keystone Chapter: **[Bipolar disorder family support group](#)** – [Click Here](#) for more information
- **[NAMI Mainline](#)** offers free mental health resources including chat rooms, help lines, tips on coping and virtual support groups

**[Emotions Anonymous](#)** international fellowship of people who desire to have a better sense of emotional well-being. Online weekly meetings available

**[National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)** (NAMI) offers discussion groups and blog for people with mental illness and family members.

NAMI Guide - **[Coronavirus: Mental Health Coping Strategies](#)** –

**[Child and Family Connections](#)** Offers online and telephone parent support group for parents who have a mental illness.

**[Depression and Bipolar Support](#)** offers online support groups 3 day a week for people with mood disorders. Also has an online parent community

**[Depression Forums](#)** is a website and bulletin board with information, links, live chat and more for people who have mood disorders.

**[Depression Understood](#)** offers forums and chatrooms for people with depression [www.depression-understood.org](http://www.depression-understood.org)

- **[GovTeen](#)** is a forum for and by teens with mental health problems and other topics. [www.govteen.org](http://www.govteen.org)

**[GriefNet](#)** offers dozens of email support groups for adults and children. [www.griefnet.org](http://www.griefnet.org)

**[OK2Talk](#)** is online blog for teens and youth to share their feelings about mental illness. [www.ok2talk.org](http://www.ok2talk.org)

**[Psych Central Community Connection](#)** offers many different online forums related to mental health.

**[ReachOut](#)** Sponsored by SAMHSA and Inspire USA Foundation, reachout.com is a teen site with facts, real stories, support and forums. [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com)

**[Recovery International](#)** offers telephone and online meetings as well as online forums [www.recoveryinternational.org](http://www.recoveryinternational.org)

**Survivors of Incest Anonymous** offers on-line and phone meetings for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse [www.siaawso.org](http://www.siaawso.org)

**Vital Cycles** offers online and phone meetings to aid in healing from trauma [www.vitalcycles.org](http://www.vitalcycles.org)

**"Staying Mentally Healthy during the Corona Virus,"** published by The Change Direction initiative

## **SUBSTANCE USE RECOVERY RESOURCES**

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If you or your loved one is ready to seek treatment for a substance use disorder, contact LCLPA (1-888-999-1941) for resources and comprehensive support. You can also call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) (Pennsylvania's Get Help Now treatment locator hotline) or contact your county Drug and Alcohol office.

**Free Hazelden Apps:** <https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/recovery/tools/apps>

- [Twenty Four Hours a Day: Recovery Meditations](#)
- [Field Guide to Life](#)
- [My Sober Life: Young Adult Recovery Support](#)
- [Inspirations: Recovery Meditations](#)

**AA General Serviced Office: COVID 19 Information**

**Medication Assisted Recovery Anonymous (MARA)** – recovery support for those on medication assisted treatment (methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone) Click on [MARA Zoom Meetings](#)

**The Daily Pledge** - free chat rooms, online meetings, family and individual resources sponsored by Hazelden Betty Ford - [Click Here](#)

**Recovery Link** – free recovery support during pandemic (meetings, peer support, physical activities) - [Click Here](#)

**Connections** Smartphone App – free app scientifically proven to support patients in recovery by reducing relapse and promoting pro-social engagement - [Click Here](#)

- Track your sobriety, access e-therapy to learn new recovery skills,
- Connect with trained counselors and peers through messaging,
- Clinical support available 7 days/week, 9am -10 pm EST
- Track your treatment plan and set reminders, journal daily about your journey,
- And discover helpful videos, testimonials and more through the unique resource library.

**WeConnect** App - free online support meetings 5x/day, 7 days/week (including meetings for women, LGBTQ+ , and for family and loved ones - [Click Here](#)

**Shatterproof**- an informational blog for people in recovery during Covid-19 - [Click Here](#)

### **Free Podcasts:**

- **Hazelden Betty Ford Let's Talk: Addiction & Recovery** - podcasts about substance use treatment and recovery and related topics - [Click Here](#)
- **Shatterproof: 5 Great Podcasts about Addiction and Recovery** [Click Here](#)



## Online and Virtual Recovery Support Resource List (compiled by ProA [www.pro-a.org](http://www.pro-a.org))

**Alcoholics Anonymous** – Offers on line support through their online intergroup link [here](#)

**Al-Anon** - Online support meetings for loved ones of individuals with substance use disorder link [here](#)

**Cocaine Anonymous** – Online Services for CA link [here](#)

**In the Rooms - Online Recovery Meetings** - In The Rooms with a simple goal in mind: to give recovering addicts a place to meet and socialize when they're not in face-to-face meetings. A global online community with over 500,000 members who share their strength and experience with one another daily. Through live meetings, discussion groups, and all the other tools In the Rooms. Link [here](#)

**LifeRing** – Secular Recovery is an organization of people who share practical experiences and sobriety support. There are as many ways to live free of drugs and alcohol as there are stories of successful sober people. LifeRing Secular Recovery on line support link [here](#)

**MarijuanaAnonymous** – District 13 online fellowship of people who share our experience, strength, and hope with one another to solve common problem and help others to recover from pot addiction. Link [here](#)

**Narcotics Anonymous** – Offers a variety of online and skype meeting options. Link [here](#)

**The Phoenix** – Recovery Community Organization offering live stream Crossfit, Yoga and Meditation daily every two hours through the COVID Crisis. Link [here](#)

**Recovery Dharma** - Offers online support meetings with buddhist-based philosophy. Link [here](#)

**Reddit Recovery** – Redditors in recovery to hang out, share experiences, and support each other. Discuss the various ways to achieve and maintain a life free from active addiction. Everyone is welcome. Link [here](#)

**Recovery Dharma** - Online support meetings for all types of recovery (mental health and substance use) using Buddhist philosophies. Click [here](#)

**Refuge Recovery** – Link to online support [here](#)

**SMART Recovery** – Self-Management And Recovery Training (SMART) is a global community of mutual-support groups. They offer online support and forums including a chat room and message board. Link [here](#)

**SoberCity** – Soberocity could be a great solution for you if you're looking for an online community that occasionally also has live events across the country. Link [here](#)

**Sobergrid** – A platform to help anyone get sober and stay sober. Some join to get support, others to give it. Each free download, post, and connection create an opportunity to stay sober while helping others do the same. Link [here](#)

**Soberistas** – International Online Recovery Community online-only community is worldwide, which makes it easy to connect with like-minded women who are friendly, non-judgmental, and helping each other kick the booze and stay sober. Link- [Here](#)

**Sober Recovery** - The forums of Sober Recovery are a great place for people with substance use disorder to find assistance and helpful information. The community has more than 168,000 people who are recovering from substance use disorder and/or codependence, as well as their friends and family. Link [here](#)

**We Connect Recovery** - Online recovery support groups will be available daily. They are open to anyone who is dealing with substance use, mental health concerns, disordered eating, as well as any other quality of life concerns. Everyone is welcome no matter your pathway to recovery or recovery status. Link [here](#)

**YPR (Young People in Recovery)** - virtual event and online meeting schedule [here](#)





## PRO-A Online and Virtual Family Recovery Support Resource List

**Adult Children of Alcoholics** – Program of men and women who grew up in dysfunctional homes that provides a safe, non-judgmental environment with online, telephone, and audio support. [Link Here](#)

**Al-Anon Electronic Meetings** – Offers online hope to anyone who is affected by alcoholism in a family member or friend through their online intergroup. [Link Here](#)

**Alateen** – Offers support for young people who have been impacted by another’s alcohol use. [Link Here](#)

### Center for Disease Control:

- **Helping Children Cope with Emergencies:** Tips for helping children coping with disaster. [Link Here](#)
- **Managing Anxiety and Stress:** Resource page and suggestions for dealing with COVID-19. [Link Here](#)
- **Taking Care of Your Emotional Health:** Resource for emotional health needs. [Link Here](#)

**CoDependent Anonymous** – CODA has online and phone meetings across the globe. [Link Here](#)

**Families Anonymous** – FA is a 12-step fellowship for the family and friends of those individuals with alcohol or substance use or related behavioral issues. Group chat, online and phone meetings available. [Link Here](#)

**Gam-Anon** – Serving the community of individuals who have been affected by the gambling problem of a loved one. [Link Here](#) Hotline number: 718-352-1671.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-TALK (24/7).

**Nar-Anon** – Offers support primarily for those who know or have known a feeling of desperation concerning the addiction problem of someone very near to them or loved ones with a substance use disorder. [Link Here](#)

**Parents of Addicted Loved Ones** – PAL is a Christian-run, non-profit group in support of parents with a child with a substance use disorder. Online Meetings available. [Link Here](#)

**Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs** – COVID 19 Information page providing access to treatment in response to COVID-19 mitigation. [Link Here](#)

**Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations-Alliance** – PRO-A works to educate, mobilize, and advocate for individuals with substance use disorders as well as family members and loved ones. Additional resources available. [Link Here](#)

**SMART Recovery Family and Friends** - A Family & Friends message board forum and live chat room for additional support are available. [Link Here](#)

### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:

- **Guide:** Helping a Loved One Dealing with Mental/and or Substance Use Disorders. [Link Here](#)
- **National Helpline for Treatment** (Mental and/or Substance Use Disorders) 1-800-662-HELP (24/7).
- **Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation** During an Infectious Disease Outbreak [Link Here](#)
- **Disaster Distress Hotline:** 1-800-985-5990, or Text *TalkWithUs* to 66746.
- **Virtual Recovery Resources** “Tips and resources for those with a mental/SUD”. [Link Here](#)

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Web site: [www.pro-a.org](http://www.pro-a.org)

Twitter Feed: <https://twitter.com/PaRecoveryOrg>

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/PaRecoveryOrganizationAlliance/](http://www.facebook.com/PaRecoveryOrganizationAlliance/)

## **25 SPECIFIC & EFFECTIVE MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS TIPS FOR QUARANTINE**

(Courtesy of the Juniper Center)

1. **Stick to a routine.** Go to sleep and wake up at a reasonable time, write a schedule that is varied and includes time for work as well as self-care.
2. **Dress for the social life you want, not the social life you have.** Get showered and dressed in comfortable clothes, wash your face, brush your teeth. Take the time to do a bath or a facial. Put on some bright colors. It is amazing how our dress can impact our mood.
3. **Get out at least once a day, for at least thirty minutes.** If you are concerned of contact, try first thing in the morning, or later in the evening, and try less traveled streets and avenues. If you are high risk or living with those who are high risk, open the windows and blast the fan. It is amazing how much fresh air can do for spirits.
4. **Find some time to move each day, again daily for at least thirty minutes.** If you don't feel comfortable going outside, there are many YouTube videos that offer free movement classes, and if all else fails, turn on the music and have a dance party!
5. **Reach out to others, you guessed it, at least once daily for thirty minutes.** Try to do FaceTime, Skype, phone calls, texting—connect with other people to seek and provide support. Don't forget to do this for your children as well. Set up virtual playdates with friends daily via FaceTime, Facebook Messenger Kids, Zoom, etc—your kids miss their friends, too!
6. **Stay hydrated and eat well.** This one may seem obvious, but stress and eating often don't mix well, and we find ourselves over-indulging, forgetting to eat, and avoiding food. Drink plenty of water, eat some good and nutritious foods, and challenge yourself to learn how to cook something new!
7. **Develop** a self-care toolkit. This can look different for everyone. A lot of successful self-care strategies involve a sensory component (seven senses: touch, taste, sight, hearing, smell, vestibular (movement) and proprioceptive (comforting pressure). An idea for each: a soft blanket or stuffed animal, a hot chocolate, photos of vacations, comforting music, lavender or eucalyptus oil, a small swing or rocking chair, a weighted blanket. A journal, an inspirational book, or a mandala coloring book is wonderful, bubbles to blow or blowing watercolor on paper through a straw are visually appealing as well as work on controlled breath. Mint gum, Listerine strips, ginger ale, frozen Starburst, ice packs, and cold are also good for anxiety regulation. For children, it is great to help them create a self-regulation comfort box (often a shoe-box or bin they can decorate) that they can use on the ready for first-aid when overwhelmed.
8. **Spend extra time playing with children.** Children will rarely communicate how they are feeling, but will often make a bid for attention and communication through play. Don't be surprised to see therapeutic themes of illness, doctor visits, and isolation play through. Understand that play is cathartic and helpful for children—it is how they process their world and problem solve, and there's a lot they are seeing and experiencing in the now.
9. **Give everyone the benefit of the doubt, and a wide berth.** A lot of cooped up time can bring out the worst in everyone. Each person will have moments when they will not be at their best. It is important to move with grace through blowups, to not show up to every argument you are invited to, and to not hold grudges and continue disagreements. Everyone is doing the best they can to make it through this.

**10. Everyone find their own retreat space.** Space is at a premium, particularly with city living. It is important that people think through their own separate space for work and for relaxation. For children, help them identify a place where they can go to retreat when stressed. You can make this place cozy by using blankets, pillows, cushions, scarves, beanbags, tents, and “forts”. It is good to know that even when we are on top of each other, we have our own special place to go to be alone.

**11. Expect behavioral issues in children, and respond gently.** We are all struggling with disruption in routine, none more than children, who rely on routines constructed by others to make them feel safe and to know what comes next. Expect increased anxiety, worries and fears, nightmares, difficulty separating or sleeping, testing limits, and meltdowns. Do not introduce major behavioral plans or consequences at this time—hold stable and focus on emotional connection.

**12. Focus on safety and attachment.** We are going to be living for a bit with the unprecedented demand of meeting all work deadlines, homeschooling children, running a sterile household, and making a whole lot of entertainment in confinement. We can get wrapped up in meeting expectations in all domains, but we must remember that these are scary and unpredictable times for children. Focus on strengthening the connection through time spent following their lead, through physical touch, through play, through therapeutic books, and via verbal reassurances that you will be there for them in this time.

**13. Lower expectations and practice radical self-acceptance.** This idea is connected with #12. We are doing too many things in this moment, under fear and stress. This does not make a formula for excellence. Instead, give yourself what psychologists call “radical self acceptance”: accepting everything about yourself, your current situation, and your life without question, blame, or pushback. You cannot fail at this—there is no roadmap, no precedent for this, and we are all truly doing the best we can in an impossible situation.

**14. Limit social media and COVID conversation, especially around children.** One can find tons of information on COVID-19 to consume, and it changes minute to minute. The information is often sensationalized, negatively skewed, and alarmist. Find a few trusted sources that you can check in with consistently, limit it to a few times a day, and set a time limit for yourself on how much you consume (again 30 minutes tops, 2-3 times daily). Keep news and alarming conversations out of earshot from children—they see and hear everything, and can become very frightened by what they hear.

**15. Notice the good in the world, the helpers.** There is a lot of scary, negative, and overwhelming information to take in regarding this pandemic. There are also a ton of stories of people sacrificing, donating, and supporting one another in miraculous ways. It is important to counter-balance the heavy information with the hopeful information.

**16. Help others.** Find ways, big and small, to give back to others. Support restaurants, offer to grocery shop, check in with elderly neighbors, write psychological wellness tips for others—helping others gives us a sense of agency when things seem out of control.

**17. Find something you can control, and control the heck out of it.** In moments of big uncertainty and overwhelm, control your little corner of the world. Organize your bookshelf, purge your closet, put together that furniture, group your toys. It helps to anchor and ground us when the bigger things are chaotic.

**18. Find a long-term project to dive into.** Now is the time to learn how to play the keyboard, put together a huge jigsaw puzzle, start a 15 hour game of Risk, paint a picture, read the Harry Potter series, binge watch an 8-season show, crochet a blanket, solve a Rubix cube, or develop a new town in Animal

Crossing. Find something that will keep you busy, distracted, and engaged to take breaks from what is going on in the outside world.

**19. Engage in repetitive movements and left-right movements.** Research has shown that repetitive movement (knitting, coloring, painting, clay sculpting, jump roping etc) especially left-right movement (running, drumming, skating, hopping) can be effective at **self-soothing** and maintaining self-regulation in moments of distress.

**20. Find an expressive art and go for it.** Our emotional brain is very receptive to the creative arts, and it is a direct portal for release of feeling. Find something that is creative (sculpting, drawing, dancing, music, singing, playing) and give it your all. See how relieved you can feel. It is a very effective way of helping kids to emote and communicate as well!

**21. Find lightness and humor in each day.** There is a lot to be worried about, and with good reason. Counterbalance this heaviness with something funny each day: cat videos on YouTube, a stand-up show on Netflix, a funny movie—we all need a little comedic relief in our day, every day.

**22. Reach out for help—your team is there for you.** If you have a therapist or psychiatrist, they are available to you, even at a distance. Keep up your medications and your therapy sessions the best you can. If you are having difficulty coping, seek out help for the first time. There are mental health people on the ready to help you through this crisis. Your children’s teachers and related service providers will do anything within their power to help, especially for those parents tasked with the difficult task of being a whole treatment team to their child with special challenges. Seek support groups of fellow home-schoolers, parents, and neighbors to feel connected. There is help and support out there, any time of the day—although we are physically distant, we can always connect virtually.

**23. “Chunk” your quarantine, take it moment by moment.** We have no road map for this. We don’t know what this will look like in 1 day, 1 week, or 1 month from now. Often, when I work with patients who have anxiety around overwhelming issues, I suggest that they engage in a strategy called “chunking”—focusing on whatever bite-sized piece of a challenge that feels manageable. Whether that be 5 minutes, a day, or a week at a time—find what feels doable for you, and set a time stamp for how far ahead in the future you will let yourself worry. Take each chunk one at a time, and move through stress in pieces.

**24. Remind yourself daily that this is temporary.** It seems in the midst of this quarantine that it will never end. It is terrifying to think of the road stretching ahead of us. Please take time to remind yourself that although this is very scary and difficult, and will go on for an undetermined amount of time, it is a season of life and it will pass. We will return to feeling free, safe, busy, and connected in the days ahead.

**25. Find the lesson.** This whole crisis can seem sad, senseless, and at times, avoidable. When psychologists work with trauma, a key feature to helping someone work through said trauma is to help them find their agency, the potential positive outcomes they can effect, the meaning and construction that can come out of destruction. What can each of us learn here, in big and small ways, from this crisis? What needs to change in ourselves, our homes, our communities, our nation, and our world?

# FACE COVID

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## How to respond effectively to the Corona crisis

by Dr Russ Harris, author of The Happiness Trap

'FACE COVID' is a set of practical steps for responding effectively to the Corona crisis, using the principles of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). Here's a quick summary of the key steps, and in the pages that follow we'll explore them all in more depth:

**F** = Focus on what's in your control

**A** = Acknowledge your thoughts & feelings

**C** = Come back into your body

**E** = Engage in what you're doing

**C** = Committed action

**O** = Opening up

**V** = Values

**I** = Identify resources

**D** = Disinfect & distance

Let's now explore these, one by one....





## F = FOCUS ON WHAT'S IN YOUR CONTROL

The Corona crisis can affect us in many different ways: physically, emotionally, economically, socially, and psychologically. All of us are (or soon will be) dealing with the very real challenges of widespread serious illness and the inabilities of healthcare systems to cope with it, social and community disruption, economic fallout and financial problems, obstacles and interruptions to many aspects of life ... and the list goes on.

And when we are facing a crisis of any sort, fear and anxiety are inevitable; they are normal, natural responses to challenging situations infused with danger and uncertainty. It's all too easy to get lost in worrying and ruminating about all sorts of things that are out of your control: what might happen in the future; how the virus might affect you or your loved ones or your community or your country or the world – and what will happen then - and so on. And while it's completely natural for us to get lost in such worries, it's not useful or helpful. Indeed the more we focus on what's not in our control, the more hopeless or anxious we're likely to feel. So the single most useful thing anyone can do in any type of crisis – Corona-related or otherwise - is to: **focus on what's in your control.**

You can't control what happens in the future. You can't control Corona virus itself or the world economy or how your government manages this whole sordid mess. And you can't magically control your feelings, eliminating all that perfectly natural fear and anxiety. But you can control what you do - here and now. And that matters.



Because what you do - here and now - can make a huge difference to yourself, and anyone living with you, and a significant difference to the community around you. The reality is, we all have far more control over our behaviour, than we do over our thoughts and feelings. So our number one aim is to take control of our behaviour - right here and now - to respond effectively to this crisis.

This involves both dealing with our inner world – all our difficult thoughts and feelings - and our outer world – all the real problems we are facing. How do we do this? Well, when a big storm blows up, the boats in the harbour drop anchor – because if they don't, they'll get swept out to sea. And of course, dropping anchor doesn't make the storm go away (anchors can't control the weather) - but it can hold a boat steady in the harbour, until the storm passes in its own good time.

Similarly, in an ongoing crisis, we're all going to experience 'emotional storms': unhelpful thoughts spinning inside our head, and painful feelings whirling around our body. And if we're swept away by that storm inside us, there's nothing effective we can do. So the first practical step is to 'drop anchor', using the simple ACE formula:

**A** = Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings

**C** = Come back into your body

**E** = Engage in what you're doing

Let's explore these one by one:





## A = ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

Silently and kindly acknowledge whatever is 'showing up' inside you: thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, sensation, urges. Take the stance of a curious scientist, observing what's going on in your inner world. As you do this, often it's helpful to put this into words, and silently say to yourself something like, 'I'm noticing anxiety', or 'Here's grief', or 'There's my mind worrying' or 'I'm having a feeling of sadness' or 'I'm having thoughts about getting sick'.

And while continuing to acknowledge your thoughts and feelings, also ....



## C = COME BACK INTO YOUR BODY

Come back into and connect with your physical body. Find your own way of doing this. You could try some or all of the following, or find your own methods:

- Slowly pushing your feet hard into the floor.
- Slowly straightening up your back and spine; if sitting, sitting upright and forward in your chair.
- Slowly pressing your fingertips together
- Slowly stretching your arms or neck, shrugging your shoulders.
- Slowly breathing

Note: you are not trying to turn away from, escape, avoid or distract yourself from what is happening in your inner world. The aim is to remain aware of your thoughts and feelings, continue to acknowledge their presence .... and at the connect with your body, and actively move it. Why? So you can gain as much control as possible over your physical actions, even though you can't control your feelings. (Remember, F = Focus on what's in your control)

And as you acknowledge your thoughts & feelings, and come back into your body, also ....



## E = ENGAGE IN WHAT YOU'RE DOING

Get a sense of where you are and refocus your attention on the activity you are doing. Find your own way of doing this. You could try some or all of the following suggestions, or find your own methods:

- Look around the room and notice 5 things you can see.
- Notice 3 or 4 things you can hear.
- Notice what you can smell or taste or sense in your nose and mouth
- Notice what you are doing
- End the exercise by giving your full attention to the task or activity at hand. (And if you don't have any meaningful activity to do, see the next 3 steps.)

Ideally, run through the ACE cycle slowly 3 or 4 times, to turn it into a 2- 3 minute exercise.

If you wish, to help you get the hang of this, you can download some free audio recordings of 'dropping anchor' exercises, varying from 1 minute to 11 minutes in length. You can listen to these and use them as a guide to help you develop this skill. You can download or stream them from the left hand box on this webpage:

<https://www.actmindfully.com.au/free-stuff/free-audio/>



*NOTE: please don't skip the A of ACE; it's so important to keep acknowledging the thoughts and feelings present, especially if they are difficult or uncomfortable. If you skip the A, this exercise will turn into a distraction technique – which it's not supposed to be.*

Dropping anchor is a very useful skill. You can use it for handling difficult thoughts, feelings, emotions, memories, urges and sensations more effectively; switching off auto-pilot and engaging in life; grounding and steadying yourself in difficult situations; disrupting rumination, obsessing and worrying; and focusing your attention on the task or activity you are doing. The better you anchor yourself in the here and now, the more control you have over your actions – which makes it a lot easier to do the next steps:  
COVID





## C = COMMITTED ACTION

Committed action means effective action, guided by your core values; action you take because it's truly important to you; action you take even if it brings up difficult thoughts and feelings. Once you have dropped anchor, using the ACE formula, you will have a lot of control over your actions – so this makes it easier to do the things that truly matter.

Now obviously that includes all those protective measures against Corona – frequent handwashing, social distancing, and so on. But in addition to those fundamentals of effective action, consider: What are simple ways to look after yourself, those you live with, and those you can realistically help? What kind, caring, supportive deeds you can do? Can you say some kind words to someone in distress – in person or via a phone call or text message? Can you help someone out with a task or a chore, or cook a meal, or hold someone's hand, or play a game with a young child? Can you comfort and soothe someone who is sick? Or in the most serious of cases, nurse them and access whatever medical assistance is available?

And if you're spending a lot more time at home, through self-isolation or forced quarantine, or social distancing, what are the most effective ways to spend that time? You may want to consider physical exercise to stay fit, cooking (as) healthy food (as possible, given restrictions), and doing meaningful activities by yourself or with others. And if you're familiar with acceptance and commitment therapy or other mindfulness-based approaches, how can you actively practice some of those mindfulness skills? Repeatedly throughout the day, ask yourself 'What can I do right now - no matter how small it may be - that improves life for myself or others I live with, or people in my community?' And whatever the answer is – do it, and engage in it fully.



## O = OPENING UP

Opening up means making room for difficult feelings and being kind to yourself. Difficult feelings are guaranteed to keep on showing up as this crisis unfolds: fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, guilt, loneliness, frustration, confusion, and many more.

We can't stop them from arising; they're normal reactions. But we can open up and make room for them: acknowledge they are normal, allow them to be there (even though they hurt), and treat ourselves kindly.

Remember, self-kindness is essential if you want to cope well with this crisis – especially if you are in a caregiver role. If you've ever flown on a plane, you've heard this message: 'In event of an emergency, put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others.' Well, self-kindness is your own oxygen mask; if you need to look after others, you'll do it a whole lot better if you're also taking good care of yourself.

So ask yourself, 'If someone I loved was going through this experience, feeling what I am feeling – if I wanted to be kind and caring towards them, how would I treat them? How would I behave towards them? What might I say or do?' Then try treating yourself the same way.

For more on self-kindness, also known as self-compassion, read this eBook:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_\\_Q3UcT9Q8VuSbiRm7x7-xjaxy5xkrba/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1__Q3UcT9Q8VuSbiRm7x7-xjaxy5xkrba/view?usp=sharing)



## V = VALUES

Committed action should be guided by your core values: What do you want to stand for in the face of this crisis? What sort of person do you want to be, as you go through this? How do you want to treat yourself and others?

Your values might include love, respect, humour, patience, courage, honesty, caring, openness, kindness .... or numerous others. Look for ways to 'sprinkle' these values into your day. Let them guide and motivate your committed action.

Of course, as this crisis unfolds, there will be all sorts of obstacles in your life; goals you can't achieve, things you can't do, problems for which there are no simple solutions. But you can still live your values in a myriad of different ways, even in the face of all those challenges. Especially come back to your values of kindness and caring. Consider:

- What are kind, caring ways you can treat yourself as you go through this?
- What are kind words you can say to yourself, kind deeds you can do for yourself?
- What are kind ways you can treat others who are suffering?
- What are kind, caring ways of contributing to the wellbeing of your community?
- What can you say and do that will enable you to look back in years to come and feel proud of your response?





## I = IDENTIFY RESOURCES

Identify resources for help, assistance, support, and advice. This includes friends, family, neighbours, health professionals, emergency services. And make sure you know the emergency helpline phone numbers, including psychological help if required.

Also reach out to your social networks. And if you are able to offer support to others, let them know; you can be a resource for other people, just as they can for you.

One very important aspect of this process involves finding a reliable and trustworthy source of information for updates on the crisis and guidelines for responding to it. The World Health Organisation website is the leading source of such information:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Also check the website of your country's government health department.

Use this information to develop your own resources: action plans to protect yourself and others, and to prepare in advance for quarantine or emergency.

## D = DISINFECT & DISTANCE PHYSICALLY

I'm sure you already know this, but it's worth repeating: disinfect your hands regularly and practice as much social distancing as realistically possible, for the greater good of your community. And remember, we're talking about physical distancing – not cutting off emotionally. (If you aren't quite sure about what this means, read this:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public> )

This is an important aspect of committed action, so align it deeply with your values; recognise that these are truly caring actions.



## IN SUMMARY

So again and again and again, as problems pile up in the world around you, and emotional storms rage in the world within you, come back to the steps of FACE COVID:

- F** = Focus on what's in your control
- A** = Acknowledge your thoughts & feelings
- C** = Come back into your body
- E** = Engage in what you're doing

- C** = Committed action
- O** = Opening up
- V** = Values
- I** = Identify resources
- D** = Disinfect & distance

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Well, I do hope there's something useful in here for you; and feel free to share this with others if you think may find it helpful.

These are crazy, difficult, scary times, so please do treat yourself kindly. And remember the words of Winston Churchill: *'When you're going through hell, keep going'*.

*All the best,*  
**Russ Harris**

## Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak

### What Is Social Distancing?

Social distancing is a way to keep people from interacting closely or frequently enough to spread an infectious disease. Schools and other gathering places such as movie theaters may close, and sports events and religious services may be cancelled.

### What Is Quarantine?

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. It lasts long enough to ensure the person has not contracted an infectious disease.

### What Is Isolation?

Isolation prevents the spread of an infectious disease by separating people who are sick from those who are not. It lasts as long as the disease is contagious.

## Introduction

In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, local officials may require the public to take measures to limit and control the spread of the disease. This tip sheet provides information about **social distancing**, **quarantine**, and **isolation**. The government has the right to enforce federal and state laws related to public health if people within the country get sick with highly contagious diseases that have the potential to develop into outbreaks or pandemics.

This tip sheet describes feelings and thoughts you may have during and after social distancing, quarantine, and isolation. It also suggests ways to care

for your behavioral health during these experiences and provides resources for more help.

## What To Expect: Typical Reactions

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations such as an infectious disease outbreak that requires social distancing, quarantine, or isolation. People may feel:

- **Anxiety, worry, or fear related to:**
  - Your own health status
  - The health status of others whom you may have exposed to the disease
  - The resentment that your friends and family may feel if they need to go into quarantine as a result of contact with you
  - The experience of monitoring yourself, or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of the disease
  - Time taken off from work and the potential loss of income and job security
  - The challenges of securing things you need, such as groceries and personal care items
- **Concern** about being able to effectively care for children or others in your care
- **Uncertainty or frustration** about how long you will need to remain in this situation, and uncertainty about the future
- **Loneliness** associated with feeling cut off from the world and from loved ones
- **Anger** if you think you were exposed to the disease because of others' negligence
- **Boredom and frustration** because you may not be able to work or engage in regular day-to-day activities
- **Uncertainty or ambivalence** about the situation
- **A desire** to use alcohol or drugs to cope
- **Symptoms of depression**, such as feelings of hopelessness, changes in appetite, or sleeping

too little or too much

- Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), such as intrusive distressing memories, flashbacks (reliving the event), nightmares, changes in thoughts and mood, and being easily startled

If you or a loved one experience any of these reactions for 2 to 4 weeks or more, contact your health care provider or one of the resources at the end of this tip sheet.

## Ways To Support Yourself During Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation

### UNDERSTAND THE RISK

Consider the real risk of harm to yourself and others around you. The public perception of risk during a situation such as an infectious disease outbreak is often inaccurate. Media coverage may create the impression that people are in immediate danger when really the risk for infection may be very low. Take steps to get the facts:

- Stay up to date on what is happening, while limiting your media exposure. Avoid watching or listening to news reports 24/7 since this tends to increase anxiety and worry. Remember that children are especially affected by what they hear and see on television.
- Look to credible sources for information on the infectious disease outbreak (see page 3 for sources of reliable outbreak-related information).

### BE YOUR OWN ADVOCATE

Speaking out about your needs is particularly important if you are in quarantine,

since you may not be in a hospital or other facility where your basic needs are met. Ensure you have what you need to feel safe, secure, and comfortable.

- Work with local, state, or national health officials to find out how you can arrange for groceries and toiletries to be delivered to your home as needed.
- Inform health care providers or health authorities of any needed medications and work with them to ensure that you continue to receive those medications.

### EDUCATE YOURSELF

Health care providers and health authorities should provide information on the disease, its diagnosis, and treatment.

- Do not be afraid to ask questions—clear communication with a health care provider may help reduce any distress associated with social distancing, quarantine, or isolation.
- Ask for written information when available.
- Ask a family member or friend to obtain information in the event that you are unable to secure this information on your own.

### WORK WITH YOUR EMPLOYER TO REDUCE FINANCIAL STRESS

If you're unable to work during this time, you may experience stress related to your job status or financial situation.

- Provide your employer with a clear explanation of why you are away from work.
- Contact the U.S. Department of Labor toll-free at 1-866-487-2365 about the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which allows U.S. employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for serious medical conditions, or to care for a family member with a

serious medical condition.

- Contact your utility providers, cable and Internet provider, and other companies from whom you get monthly bills to explain your situation and request alternative bill payment arrangements as needed.

#### CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Reaching out to people you trust is one of the best ways to reduce anxiety, depression, loneliness, and boredom during social distancing, quarantine, and isolation. You can:

- Use the telephone, email, text messaging, and social media to connect with friends, family, and others.
- Talk “face to face” with friends and loved ones using Skype or FaceTime.
- If approved by health authorities and your health care providers, arrange for your friends and loved ones to bring you newspapers, movies, and books.

#### Sources for Reliable Outbreak-Related Information

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027  
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)  
<http://www.cdc.gov>

**World Health Organization**  
Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization  
525 23rd Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-974-3000  
<http://www.who.int/en>

- Sign up for emergency alerts via text or email to ensure you get updates as soon as they are available.
- Call SAMHSA’s free 24-hour Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990, if you feel lonely or need support.
- Use the Internet, radio, and television to keep up with local, national, and world events.
- If you need to connect with someone because of an ongoing alcohol or drug problem, consider calling your local Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous offices.

#### TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

If you are in a medical facility, you may have access to health care providers who can answer your questions. However, if you are quarantined at home, and you’re worried about physical symptoms you or your loved ones may be experiencing, call your doctor or other health care provider:

- Ask your provider whether it would be possible to schedule remote appointments via Skype or FaceTime for mental health, substance use, or physical health needs.
- In the event that your doctor is unavailable and you are feeling stressed or are in crisis, call the hotline numbers listed at the end of this tip sheet for support.

#### USE PRACTICAL WAYS TO COPE AND RELAX

- Relax your body often by doing things that work for you—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate or pray, or engage in activities you enjoy.
- Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do something fun after a hard task.
- Talk about your experiences and feelings to loved ones and friends, if you find it helpful.
- Maintain a sense of hope and positive



thinking; consider keeping a journal where you write down things you are grateful for or that are going well.

#### **AFTER SOCIAL DISTANCING, QUARANTINE, OR ISOLATION**

You may experience mixed emotions, including a sense of relief. If you were isolated because you had the illness, you may feel sadness or anger because friends and loved ones may have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious.

The best way to end this common fear is to learn about the disease and the actual risk to others. Sharing this information will often calm fears in others and allow you to reconnect with them.

If you or your loved ones experience symptoms of extreme stress—such as trouble sleeping, problems with eating too much or too little, inability to carry out routine daily activities, or using drugs or alcohol to cope—speak to a health care provider or call one of the hotlines listed to the right for a referral.

**If you are feeling overwhelmed with emotions such as sadness, depression, anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or someone else, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).**

## Helpful Resources

### Hotlines

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline

Toll-Free: 1-800-985-5990 (English and español)

SMS: Text TalkWithUs to 66746

SMS (español): "Hablamos" al 66746

TTY: 1-800-846-8517

Website (English): <http://www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>

Website (español): <http://www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov/espanol.aspx>

### **SAMHSA's National Helpline**

Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (24/7/365 Treatment Referral Information Service in English and español)

Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Toll-Free (English): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Toll-Free (español): 1-888-628-9454

TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)

Website (English): <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Website (español): <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/gethelp/spanish.aspx>

### **Treatment Locator**

Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator Website:

<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator/home>

For help finding treatment 1-800-662-HELP (4357) <https://findtreatment.gov/>

SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center

Toll-Free: 1-800-308-3515

Email: [DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov)

Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>

**\*Note: Inclusion or mention of a resource in this fact sheet does not imply endorsement by the Center for Mental Health Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.**

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# Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks

## What You Should Know

When you hear, read, or watch news about an outbreak of an infectious disease such as Ebola, you may feel anxious and show signs of stress—even when the outbreak affects people far from where you live and you are at low or no risk of getting sick. These signs of stress are normal, and may be more likely or pronounced in people with loved ones in parts of the world affected by the outbreak. In the wake of an infectious disease outbreak, monitor your own physical and mental health. Know the signs of stress in yourself and your loved ones. Know how to relieve stress, and know when to get help.

## Know the Signs of Stress

What follows are behavioral, physical, emotional, and cognitive responses that are all common signs of anxiety and stress. You may notice some of them after you learn about an infectious disease outbreak.

### YOUR BEHAVIOR:

- An increase or decrease in your energy and activity levels
- An increase in your alcohol, tobacco use, or use of illegal drugs
- An increase in irritability, with outbursts of anger and frequent arguing
- Having trouble relaxing or sleeping
- Crying frequently
- Worrying excessively
- Wanting to be alone most of the time
- Blaming other people for everything
- Having difficulty communicating or listening
- Having difficulty giving or accepting help
- Inability to feel pleasure or have fun

## Know When To Get Help

You may experience serious distress when you hear about an infectious disease outbreak, even if you are at little or no risk of getting sick. If you or someone you know shows signs of stress (see list at left) for several days or weeks, get help by accessing one of the resources at the end of this tip sheet. Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline right away if you or someone you know threatens to hurt or kill him- or herself or someone else, or talks or writes about death, dying, or suicide.





### YOUR BODY:

- Having stomachaches or diarrhea
- Having headaches and other pains
- Losing your appetite or eating too much
- Sweating or having chills
- Getting tremors or muscle twitches
- Being easily startled

### YOUR EMOTIONS:

- Being anxious or fearful
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling angry
- Feeling heroic, euphoric, or invulnerable
- Not caring about anything
- Feeling overwhelmed by sadness

### YOUR THINKING:

- Having trouble remembering things
- Feeling confused
- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Having difficulty making decisions

## Know How To Relieve Stress

You can manage and alleviate your stress by taking time to take care of yourself.

### KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE:

Set limits on how much time you spend reading or watching news about the outbreak. You will want to stay up to date on news of the outbreak, particularly if you have loved ones in places where many people have gotten sick. But make sure to take time away from the news to focus on things in your life that are going well and that you can control.

### GET THE FACTS:

Find people and resources you can depend on for accurate health information. Learn from them about the outbreak and how you can protect yourself against illness, if you are at risk. You may turn to your family doctor, a state or local health department, U.S. government agencies, or an international organization. Check out the sidebar on the next page for links to good sources of information about infectious disease outbreaks.

### KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY:

- Eat healthy foods, and drink water.
- Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol.
- Do not use tobacco or illegal drugs.
- Get enough sleep and rest.
- Get physical exercise.

### USE PRACTICAL WAYS TO RELAX:

- Relax your body often by doing things that work for you—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate, wash your face and hands, or engage in pleasurable hobbies.
- Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do a fun thing after a hard task.
- Use time off to relax—eat a good meal, read, listen to music, take a bath, or talk to family.
- Talk about your feelings to loved ones and friends often.



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Take care of your physical health to help lower your stress. Take a break to focus on positive parts of your life, like connections with loved ones.

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### PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY, FEELINGS, AND SPIRIT:

- Recognize and heed early warning signs of stress.
- Recognize how your own past experiences affect your way of thinking and feeling about this event, and think of how you handled your thoughts, emotions, and behavior around past events.
- Know that feeling stressed, depressed, guilty, or angry is common after an event like an infectious disease outbreak, even when it does not directly threaten you.
- Connect with others who may be experiencing stress about the outbreak. Talk about your feelings about the outbreak, share reliable health information, and enjoy conversation unrelated to the outbreak, to remind yourself of the many important and positive things in your lives.
- Take time to renew your spirit through meditation, prayer, or helping others in need.

### Sources for Credible Outbreak-Related Health Information

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027  
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)  
<https://www.cdc.gov>

#### World Health Organization

Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization  
525 23rd Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-974-3000  
<http://www.who.int/en>

## Helpful Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
(SAMHSA)

5600 Fishers Lane

Rockville, MD 20857

Toll-Free: 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

Email: info@samhsa.hhs.gov

SAMHSA Store: https://store.samhsa.gov

### **SAMHSA Hotlines**

#### **SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline**

Toll-Free: 1-800-985-5990 (English and español)

SMS: Text TalkWithUs to 66746

SMS (español): "Hablamos" al 66746

TTY: 1-800-846-8517

Website in English: https://

www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov

Website in Spanish: https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/  
disaster-distress-helpline/espanol

#### **SAMHSA's National Helpline**

Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (24/7/365 Treatment Referral

Information Service in English and español)

Website: https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-  
helpline

#### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Toll-Free: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

Toll-Free (español): 1-888-628-9454

TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (1-800-799-4889)

Website in English: https://

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Website in Spanish: https://

suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/en-espanol

### **Treatment Locator**

#### **Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator**

Website: https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator/home

### **SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center**

Toll-Free: 1-800-308-3515

Email: DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov

Website: https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac

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*\*Note: Inclusion of a resource in this fact sheet does not imply endorsement by the Center for Mental Health Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*



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