

Coping with Stress – Home Stretch

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives. Many of us are facing challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming, and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but they can make us feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. **Learning to cope with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and those around you become more resilient.**

Stress can cause the following:

- Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration
- Changes in appetite, energy, desires, and interests
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Worsening of mental health conditions
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances

It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are ways that you can help yourself, others, and your community manage stress.

Health Ways to Cope with Stress

- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories**, including those on social media. It's good to be informed but hearing about the pandemic constantly can be upsetting. Consider limiting news to just a couple times a day and disconnecting from phone, tv, and computer screens for a while.
- **Take care of your body.**
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate
 - Try to eat health, well-balanced meals.
 - Exercise regularly.
 - Get plenty of sleep.
 - Avoid excessive alcohol, tobacco, and substance use.
 - Continue with routine preventive measures (such as vaccinations, cancer screenings, etc.) as recommended by your healthcare provider.
 - Get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when available.
- **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- **Connect with your community or faith-based organizations.** While social distancing measures may be in place, try connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.

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Helping Others Cope

Taking care of yourself can better equip you to take care of others. During times of social distancing, it is especially important to stay connected with your friends and family. Helping others cope with stress through phone calls or video chats can help you and your loved ones feel less lonely or isolated.

SAMPLE

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html> 1/22/21

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