



DEALING WITH TIMES OF STRESS

The COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that may cause severe illness and even death. Fear and anxiety surrounding the disease, and social isolation may become overwhelmingly stressful. In addition to treatment and prevention of the illness, it is important to care for our psychological and spiritual health. The following are stressors to consider.

The Stressor of SOCIAL ISOLATION:

“Social distancing” may cause isolation. Practice "physical distancing" (six feet apart, masks, gloves, and stay home) but at the same time, know that we need social interaction for our mental health. Physical distancing can be accomplished and still be socially connected.

Stay connected. Hurray for social media! Whatever your preference...pen and paper, skype, smoke signals...Use them to stay connected to family and friends. Church services bring us together as a community. See stillwaterschurch.com.

Be creative. Be safe.

The Stressor of DISCOMBOBULATED ROUTINES:

Lack of routine may cause boredom which may lead to depression. Wake-up and make your bed!

Projects

- Set goals (sew a face mask!) with rewards
- Finish a puzzle
- Watch a movie
- Garden/home repair projects. It's SPRING! A time of renewal!



The Stressor of SCREEN TIME:

The barrage of frightening information can be upsetting. Limit screen time. In addition to anxiety producing information, too much screen time especially prior to bed may be disruptive to normal sleep patterns.



Stay informed with accurate information: **[Cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)**

The Stressor of FINANCIAL CONCERNS:

We are all worried about our finances... whether it be multimillion dollar corporations or individuals trying to afford food, shelter and health care. Watching the stock market go haywire or your job disappear, the worries and anxiety are the same.

Become proactive in learning where help is available. These websites give information about the federal relief bill:

- **[IRS.gov/coronavirus](https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus)** for individual government aid
- **[SBA.gov/coronavirus](https://www.sba.gov/coronavirus)** for small businesses
- Social services in your community may be able to direct you.

KIDS!! HOME WORK!! WILD ROMPUS!!

Children and teens may be affected by isolation and changing daily routines. Depression is seen in young children as well as in adults.



Depression is often manifest as physical ailments in children.

- Emotional upheaval: tantrums, naughtiness, regression of toilet training habits, rude behavior.
- Change in sleep habits: too much, too little, or night time awakenings.
- Eating disorders, nausea, vomiting and generalized stomach aches. Nonspecific complaints of stomach aches, headaches, extremity aches and pains, lack of energy and fatigue.

KIDS COPING WITH COVID-19 ASSOCIATED STRESS

- REASSURANCE from parents, caregivers, church, family
- ROUTINE SCHEDULES
- PLANS in place for when a disaster occurs. Who will take care of me?
- SCREEN TIME limited especially to listening to the news
- SOCIAL CONNECTIONS with friends and family. Stillwaters youth leaders have been very creative in helping our children stay connected.
- BE INFORMED. [cdc.gov/childrenindisasters](https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters) is a good site for positive information.

FOR ALL OF US:

- **EXERCISE** stimulates endorphin production which helps us find happiness. Spring renews our spirit. Play outside!
- **DIET**. Continue healthy diet choices while remaining safe with curbside pick-up or on line ordering.
- **AVOID** unhealthy strategies like using alcohol or other drugs, tobacco, or addictive behaviors to cope with stressful situations.
- **SPIRITUALITY**: Stillwaters (**stillwaterschurch.com**) provides spiritual support. Our online services are beautiful and inspiring. Research has shown spirituality decreases stress and depression and increases psychological well-being.
- Create a sense of peace (prayer, meditation, relaxation)
- Give up control (I don't have to solve everything)
- Improve connectiveness (be part of the community)
- Maintain a sense of purpose (Matthew 6:11 Help me to know what I need to do and the strength and courage to do it)
- HOSANNA! "Sometimes our situation seems hopeless". See Pastor Lori's message from 4/5/2020 (**stillwaterschurch.com**) to find the "journey toward hope" with OUR super hero.



SEEK A MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER if your situation becomes overwhelming

Stay Home, Stay Safe, Wear a Mask, Stay Healthy

Larry Gill