



Your Mental Health and COVID-19

As humans, when we perceive danger, our bodies enter into the fight, flight, or freeze response. This survival instinct is an automatic and helpful reaction when we need to keep ourselves safe. However, it can also cause us to become fearful and to behave in unhelpful ways, particularly if we have been under stress for a long period of time. Some harmful reactions that sustained stress can cause include panic attacks, over-watching reports of stressing situations, and using substances and other input like television and internet to disengage from reality. Fear, stress, and anxiety can cause us to feel out of control, and it is important to take steps to address such feelings to stay healthy.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads, many of us will be fearful for ourselves, others, and the future. There are some steps that we can take to help our mental health:

Rely on legitimate resources for information. There are rumors and myths that begin circulating when panic and fear set in. Make sure you are receiving accurate information, especially before sharing it with others. Utilize resources like the [CDC](#), [WHO](#), [Tennessee Department of Health](#). Avoid consuming the majority of your news through social media.

Set limits on the amount of news you watch about COVID-19. Only allow yourself to view information about the COVID-19 situation at certain times of the day. Consuming more information about the situation can make it seem uncontrollable and hopeless.

Take care of yourself. Exercise, meditate, eat healthy, and get rest. Often when we are under stress, taking care of ourselves is tossed out the window. Taking care of yourself will not only help your health, it will help your resilience in dealing with the stress.

Reach out to others for support. In times of self-containment, we may not be able to physically surround ourselves with others, but we can continue to reach out by phone, facetime, and social media.

Keep a positive outlook and remain hopeful. Focus on the positive stories of neighbors helping each other, on those who have recovered, and the fact that this situation is temporary. Creating gratitude lists can help build positivity.

Acknowledge the feelings you are having. Check in with yourself. Are your thoughts and feelings more negative? If so, talk about them with friends, family, and mental health professionals. Processing feelings can relieve emotional pain.

Talk to your children. Children are perceptive and keenly watch their parents. Tell them the facts in a developmentally age appropriate manner. If they see you stressed, they may become stressed. They may become fearful, sad, withdrawn, or may even display regressive behaviors. Be honest and help them understand what is happening.

Seek help from a professional. Reach out if the stress and fear is starting to affect your life in a negative way. You are not alone. Please contact us by phone or email (listed below).

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Additional Mental Health Resources

Anxiety

[Crisis Text Line](#) - For free confidential, 24/7 support for anxiety, text "HOME" to 741741

[Science-based strategies for coping with COVID anxiety](#) - The Conversation

Law Practice/Office Management/Leadership

[CLEs and Resources on Law Practice During COVID-19](#) - American Bar Association

[Organizational Leadership and Managing COVID-19 Panic](#) - Forbes

[Tips for Working Remotely](#) - Fast Company

Panic

[Mental Health and Panic Associated with COVID-19](#) - The Star

Social Distancing

[Coping Mentally with Social Distancing, Isolation and Quarantine](#) - SAMHSA

Call SAMHSA's 24-hour Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 if you feel lonely or need support

Staying Mentally Healthy

[Challenges for Mental Health and Coping Mechanisms during COVID-19](#) - CDC

[Tips for Staying Mentally Healthy](#) - Change Direction

[Tips for Managing Our Mental Health in Troubling Times](#) - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

[Support Groups for Mental Health](#) - National Alliance on Mental Illness

[Depression and Bipolar Support](#) - Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

[Talking with Children During Infectious Disease Outbreak](#) - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Stress

[Tips on Managing Stress Levels in the Office](#) - ABA Journal

[Coping with Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#) - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Substance Abuse Resources

[AA](#) - Alcoholics Anonymous Online Intergroup

[In the Rooms](#) - A global recovery community

[Al-Anon](#) - Al-Anon Family Groups Electronic Meetings

[SMART Recovery](#) - Online recovery community

["The Addicted Lawyer" Blog](#) - Brian Cuban's blog with guidance and options for recovery meetings

[Fear Not: Speaking Out to End Stigma](#) - Three-minute video on the importance of seeking help for mental health and substance use disorders by the American Bar Association Commission on Lawyers Assistance Programs

Suicide

Free, confidential 24/7 support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for oneself and others Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK; <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Contact TLAP

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