

April 2020

COVID-19 & Mental Health

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Experiencing Stress & Anxiety Because of COVID-19

It's common to feel stressed or anxious during this time. It may be especially hard for people who already manage feelings of anxiety or emotional distress. For example, for those with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), public health recommendations about contamination and hand washing may make it more difficult to manage symptoms.

Recognizing how you're feeling can help you care for yourself, manage your stress and cope with these difficult situations. Even when you don't have full control of a situation, there are things you can do.

Stay informed, take action, maintain healthy social connections and find resources for support.



De-Stress & Self Care is a Must

Have you forgotten how to de-stress?

Given the current world circumstances, stress is at an all-time high for many people. It may even seem like you just don't have time to fit in stress-relieving activities.

Quarantine life and schedule changes from the last few weeks have many people on edge. Not to mention the everyday stressors on top of that. Add in that 83% of American workers have work-related stress, and it only makes sense to take a look at the impact it has on productivity, relationships, and more.

With that being said, self-care is a must right now.

Now is the perfect time to remind yourself what it means to unwind — both your body and your mind.

Reminders:

- Practice social distancing; six feet between people
- Effective hand washing takes at least 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- If possible, leave children at home when completing essential errands
- Stay hydrated and consume healthy foods

Take Care of Yourself Through Exercise & Movement

If you're staying home, you may be less physically active than usual. It's important to keep movement as part of your daily life, whether it's exercise or light movement like stretching and making sure you're not sitting down too long.

Exercise is a great way to care for your body. It is a powerful way to improve both your physical and mental health. Research suggests that when we exercise, our brain releases chemicals that help us better manage stress and anxiety.

There are many different ways to exercise. Many of them are free, don't require any equipment and can be done at home. Most people can find an exercise routine that fits their needs and abilities. If you don't typically exercise or have health concerns, you may want to talk with your primary care provider before starting a new activity.

Execute Daily Healthy Routines

Your daily habits and routines can help you feel more in control of your own well-being and reduce stress.

- ♦ Make your bed
- ♦ Get dressed
- ♦ Connect with loved ones
- ♦ Exercise regularly; walk, stretch, dance, yoga, etc.
- ♦ Make time for breaks
- ♦ Practice good hygiene, especially by cleaning your hands
- ♦ Prioritize sleep and good nutrition

"Today I refuse to stress myself out about things I cannot control or change."

~Anonymous



Practice Relaxing in the Present Moment

Mindfulness is a way of practicing awareness that can reduce your stress. It involves focusing your attention on the present moment and accepting it without judgment. It may also help people manage some mental health symptoms.

There are lots of online resources about mindfulness, meditation, breathing exercises and more. Some organizations, including yoga studios, offer free classes online as well. Grounding exercises can help you notice the sights, sounds, smells and sensations around you rather than being absorbed in your thoughts.

I'm a Smoker and Smoking More, What Should I Do?

People living with mental illness have a high rate of smoking. In America, 44.3% of all cigarettes are consumed by individuals who live with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders. People with schizophrenia are three to four times as likely to smoke as the general population.

Smoking weakens your lung's natural ability to defend you from illness. People who smoke tobacco or who vape may be at greater risk of getting seriously ill with COVID-19. COVID-19 is a disease that mostly affects the lungs.

If you smoke, consider quitting smoking immediately. Ask your health care provider about smoking cessation (quitting) programs or over-the-counter quitting aids like nicotine gum or patches. You can visit websites like QUIT.COM or SMOKEFREE.GOV for a variety of resources to help you quit!



Manage How You Consume Information

Equip yourself with information from credible, reputable sources such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Security also provides the latest updates in the Shift Briefing, emailed three times daily.

It's generally a good idea to stay informed. Having some limits on your news consumption can help:

- ♦ Watching or listening to the same news constantly can increase stress. Reading can be an easier medium to control how much and what kind of information you're absorbing.
- ♦ Set limits on when and for how long you consume news and information, including through social media. Set a daily block of time, approximately 15 minutes, for news consumption.
- ♦ False information spreads very easily on social media and can have serious consequences for individual and public health. Always verify sources and make sure they are reputable.

Good News You Should Know

As of April 16, 2020, of the 200,000+ COVID-19 tests that have been administered in the state of Florida, approximately 90% of those tests have shown negative test results for the virus.



We will get through this together!

Shades of Green

Orange County, Florida

1950 W. Magnolia Palm Drive
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830

Main Line: 407-824-3400
Safety Office: 407-824-1990
Security Office: 407-824-1458

YOUR HEALTH
AND SAFETY
MATTERS
TO US!

You Are Not Alone

Those who struggle with anxiety disorders frequently have intense, excessive and persistent worry and fear about everyday situations. COVID-19 can add to one's "typical" levels of stress and worry. Kids and their parents may see an exacerbation of these issues occur during a crisis.

Fear of the unknown and uncertainty over how long we'll have to resort to limiting our daily lives, fear of contracting the coronavirus or even worry about how this will affect one's financial situation are legitimate concerns. It's important to know that we are all in this together. There are millions of Americans who are worried about the same thing and feeling the effects of COVID-19.

So, even though we are physically isolated, we are not alone in how we are feeling. Use the resources below, or reach out to your Safety Office for guidance.



Resources

National Alliance on Mental Illness Greater Orlando: Dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals and supporting families affected by mental illness

- ♦ Website: <https://namigo.org/>
- ♦ Phone: 407.253.1900
- ♦ Email: information@namigo.org

Quit Smoking: Find yourself smoking more due to stress?

- ♦ Websites: quit.com or smokefree.gov
- ♦ Phone ("Quitline"): 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)

Emotional Support & Counseling: Free online chatting for emotional support

- ♦ Website: 7cups.com

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (8255)

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (7233)

Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-HOPE (4673)

Let's Connect!

Asking for
help is a sign
of STRENGTH
not WEAKNESS.