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Coping with Stress

Updated Jan. 22, 2021 Languages ▾ [Print](#)



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.

Healthy 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 healthy, 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 are in place, try connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.












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.

Mental Health and Crisis

- If you are struggling to cope, there are many ways to get help. Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.
- During times of extreme stress, people may have thoughts of suicide. Suicide is preventable and help is available. More about the risk of suicide, signs to watch for, and how to respond if you notice these signs in yourself or a friend or a loved one, can be found [here](#).
- Free and confidential crisis [resources](#) can also help you or a loved one connect with a skilled, trained counselor in your area.


If you are in crisis, get immediate help:

- Call 911
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)  : 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English, 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish, or [Lifeline Crisis Chat](#)  .
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)  e: 1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22522
- [National Child Abuse Hotline](#)  : 1-800-4AChild (1-800-422-4453) or text 1-800-422-4453
- [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#)  : 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or [Online Chat](#) 
- [Veteran's Crisis Line](#)  : 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or [Crisis Chat](#)  or text: 8388255
- [Disaster Distress Helpline](#)  : CALL or TEXT 1-800-985-5990 (press 2 for Spanish).
- [The Eldercare Locator](#)  : 1-800-677-1116 – [TTY Instructions](#) 

Resources and Social Support Services

[Food and Food System Resources During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)





[Disaster Financial Assistance with Food, Housing, and Bills](#) 

[Coronavirus Resources for Renters](#) 






[US Department of Labor Coronavirus Resources](#) 

Resources



For Everyone

- [How Right Now](#) 
- [Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#)
- [General Public: Care for Yourself](#)  [348 KB, 1 page]
- [Young Adults: Care for Yourself](#)  [839 KB, 1 page]
- [HHS ASPR TRACIE COVID-19 Behavioral Health Resources](#) 
- [Food and Food System Resources During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)




For Families and Children

- [Helping Children Cope during the Pandemic](#)
- [Helping Children Cope with Emergencies](#)
- [Coping After a Disaster](#)  [1.9 MB, 20 pages] – A Ready Wrigley activity book for children age 3-10
- [Teen Depression](#) 
- [Parents: Care for Yourself](#)  [780 KB, 1 page]
- [Family Caregivers: Care for Yourself](#)  [732 KB, 1 page]
- [Students: Care for Yourself](#)  [688 KB, 1 page]
- [Food Assistance Programs](#) 




For People at Higher Risk for Serious Illness

- [Serious Illness Care Program COVID-19 Response Toolkit](#) 
- [Older Adults: Care for Yourself](#)  [911 KB, 1 page]

For Healthcare Workers and First Responders

- [Healthcare Personnel and First Responders: How to Cope with Stress and Build Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Emergency Responders: Tips for Taking Care of Yourself](#)
- [Disaster Technical Assistance Center](#) 
- [First Responders: Care for Yourself](#)  [770 KB, 1 page]
- [Clinicians: Care for Yourself](#)  [685 KB, 1 page]


For Other Workers


- [Employees: How to Cope with Job Stress and Build Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Working Adults: Care for Yourself](#)  [818 KB, 1 page]
- [Critical Workers: Care for Yourself](#)  [719 KB, 1 page]
- [Teachers: Encourage Your Students to Care for Themselves](#)  [976 KB, 1 page]

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 Get Email Updates

To receive email updates about COVID-19, enter your email address:

[What's this?](#)