



HELPING HANDS



How to Stay Mentally Healthy During the Coronavirus Pandemic

(Excerpts from [verywellmind.com](https://www.verywellmind.com). By [Amy Morin, LCSW](#) Medically reviewed by [Daniel B. Block, MD](#) Published on March 19, 2020)

Managing mental health during the Coronavirus pandemic is vital to your overall well-being. While it is happening, these steps can help address your psychological well-being. Being proactive and taking care of your mind and emotions during this time, will help you maintain positive mental health.

How Coronavirus Might Impact Your Mental Health

Stress

Fear of catching the virus and worrying about how you're going to pay the bills are just two of the stresses of the situation that can make it difficult to function. You may have to deal with a variety of practical problems—from figuring out childcare issues to determining how to keep your small business afloat. And you are also likely dealing with a lot of uncertainty. There are many unknowns about the virus. Your day-to-day life may be changing rapidly as regulations and recommendations continue to roll out regarding social contact.

Disrupted Routines

Many people are working from home while also having their children at home right now. And most social gatherings and events have been canceled. No matter where you live, your routine has likely been disrupted in some way. Having less structure, a changing schedule, and complete uncertainty about how long this will last can take a toll on your mental health.

Cabin Fever

Staying inside for extended periods of time can cause you to feel restless. For some people it causes anxiety. For others staying indoors causes boredom. If left unaddressed, this could lead to a decline in mental health.

Lack of Social Contact

For most people, the coronavirus pandemic means a lot less social contact. Some are separated from family members and co-workers; others live alone and aren't able to see anyone face-to-face. Social interaction is vital for good mental health. Reduced contact with others can lead to feelings of depression and anxiety.

Reduced Physical Activity

Whether you normally walk a half-mile to get on the train, or you have a job that involves a fair amount of physical labor, there's a good chance your current work situation may not require you to move as much as you usually do. Many gyms have closed in an effort to support social distancing. There may be fewer opportunities to work out—which may have been one of your most accessible coping skills.

Changes in Mood

You might feel like you're on a bit of an emotional rollercoaster right now. Whether you're more irritable, sad, or anxious than usual, these emotions should be expected. Bigger shifts in your mood might be the sign of something more serious. If you're struggling to manage your emotions, or if your emotions are making it difficult to function, it can be a sign that you may need to address your mental health. Other signs of concern include: changes in sleep habits, changes in appetite or weight, difficulty functioning including having trouble taking care of your daily needs—taking a shower, doing household chores, or caring for your kids—it might be a sign that you may need to seek help to improve your psychological well-being.

Your Employee Assistance Program representative can help find resources to address your concerns.

Contact information is on the following page

Steps You Can Take to Manage Your Mental Health

Get Physically Active

Research¹ clearly shows that physical activity is a vital component of good mental health. Consider how you can still get exercise right now and incorporate it into your daily routine.

Maintain Social Connections

Even when you can't physically be around people, you can still remain connected to friends, family, and community.

Focus on the Things You Can Control

There are many things outside of your control during a pandemic. And thinking about all of these things won't do any good.

Practice Healthy Coping Skills

It's important to think about the healthy coping skills you'll use when you're hit with moments of overwhelming anxiety or you begin to feel sad. Explore new skills you can practice, such as writing in a journal. You might also discover a meditation app or one that helps you practice a variety of relaxation techniques and stress relievers like progressive muscle relaxation

Be Selective About Your Media Consumption

While it's important to stay informed, consuming constant content about the coronavirus can keep you in a heightened state of distress. These tips can be useful: Don't keep the TV on news channels. Be mindful of your social media time. Follow people whom you find inspirational. Be selective with the content you consume.



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

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Sources for Credible Outbreak- Related Health Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027 1-800-
CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
<https://www.cdc.gov>

World Health Organization

Regional Office for the Americas
of the World Health Organiza-
tion
525 23rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

202-974-3000
<http://www.who.int/en>

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