

## STRESS AND COPING (Excerpted from CDC.gov)

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be causing stress for you and your family. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.



### Need Help? Know Someone Who Does?

**Disaster Distress Helpline** – Available 24/7 providing crisis counseling for people experiencing emotional distress related to disasters. Toll-free, multilingual and confidential crisis support in the US and its Territories.

**1-800-985-5990**

**National Domestic Violence Hotline** – Available 24/7 to talk confidentially with anyone experiencing domestic violence, seeking resources or help creating a safety plan.

**1-800-799-7233**

**Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations.** How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in.

### People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include

- Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19
- Children and teens
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders
- People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use

### Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, [tobacco](#), or [other drugs](#)

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. Additional information can be found at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration website at [www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness](http://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness).

**If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call**

- 911
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text SAMHSA at TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517).

### **Things you can do to support yourself**

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or [meditate](#). [Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals](#), [exercise regularly](#), [get plenty of sleep](#), and [avoid alcohol](#) and [drugs](#).
- 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.

Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.

## Reduce stress in yourself and others

When you [share accurate information about COVID-19](#) and understand the actual risk to yourself and others, you can help make people feel less stressed and connect better with them. Learn more about [taking care of your emotional health](#).



## For parents

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

### Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some changes to watch for include

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting)
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens
- Poor school performance or avoiding school
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

### There are many things you can do to support your child

- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and [share facts](#) about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Limit your family’s exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.

Learn more about [helping children cope](#).



### **For people who have been released from quarantine**

Being separated from others if a healthcare provider thinks you may have been exposed to COVID-19 can be stressful, even if you do not get sick. Everyone feels differently after coming out of quarantine. Some feelings include:

- Mixed emotions, including relief after quarantine
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Stress from the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during quarantine
- Other emotional or mental health changes

Children may also feel upset or have other strong emotions if they, or someone they know, has been released from quarantine. [You can help your child cope.](#)

Please visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for complete information on Coronavirus, as well as more tips on managing stress for parents, family members and children.