

Coping with Stress-Pandemics can be stressful

From the Center's of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Updated Dec. 11, 2020

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. However, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19. **Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.**

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can sometimes cause the following:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of [tobacco](#), and/or [alcohol and other substances](#).

Get immediate help in a crisis

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

Find a health care provider or treatment for substance use disorder and mental health

- [SAMHSA's National Helplineexternal icon](#): 1-800-662-HELP (4357) and TTY 1-800-487-4889
- [Treatment Services Locator Websiteexternal icon](#)

- [Interactive Map of Selected Federally Qualified Health Centers](#)

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations

How you respond to stress during the COVID-19 pandemic can depend on your background, your social support from family or friends, your financial situation, your health and emotional background, the community you live in, and many other factors. The changes that can happen because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ways we try to contain the spread of the virus can affect anyone.

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

- People who are [at higher risk for severe illness](#) from COVID-19 (for example, older people, and people of any age with certain [underlying medical conditions](#)).
- [Children](#) and [teens](#).
- People [caring for family members or loved ones](#).
- Frontline workers such as [health care providers and first responders](#),
- Essential workers who work in the [food industry](#).
- People who have existing [mental health conditions](#).
- People who use [substances](#) or have a substance use disorder.
- People who have lost their jobs, had their work hours reduced, or had other major changes to their employment.
- [People who have disabilities](#) or developmental delay.
- People who are [socially isolated](#) from others, including people who live alone, and people in rural or frontier areas.
- People in some [racial and ethnic minority groups](#).
- People who do not have access to information in their primary language.
- People experiencing [homelessness](#).
- People who live in [congregate \(group\) settings](#).

Take care of yourself and your community

Taking care of your friends and your family can be a stress reliever, but it should be balanced with care for yourself. [Helping others cope with their stress](#), such as by providing social support, can also make your community stronger. During times of increased social distancing, people can still maintain social connections and care for their mental health. Phone calls or video chats can help you and your loved ones feel socially connected, less lonely, or isolated.

Healthy ways to cope with stress

- **Know [what to do if you are sick](#) and are concerned about COVID-19.** Contact a health professional before you start any self-treatment for COVID-19.
- **Know where and how to get treatment** and other support services and resources, including counseling or therapy (in person or through telehealth services).
- **Take care of your emotional health.** [Taking care of your emotional health](#) will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family.
- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories**, including those on social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.

- **Take care of your body.**
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or [meditateexternal icon](#).
 - [Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals](#).
 - [Exercise regularly](#).
 - [Get plenty of sleep](#).
 - Avoid excessive [alcohol and drug use](#).
- **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, consider connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>