

Manage what you can in uncertain times: mental and physical health

Feelings of anxiety and stress are a normal and necessary response when faced with uncertainty or challenges. One of the best ways to manage anxiety and stress during times of uncertainty, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, is to focus on what's within your control. You are not alone. See below for steps you can take today to improve your mental health, which will contribute to your physical health.

Normal reactions to stressful times

Check your own reactions and recognize them as normal reactions.

- Feeling fatigued or more tired than usual
- Difficulty sleeping
- Increased irritability
- Body aches or headaches
- Difficulty concentrating/focusing
- Appetite changes, especially loss of appetite
- Difficulty communicating well with others

Tips for managing what you can



Get enough sleep:

Stick to a bedtime schedule. Turn off electronics 30 to 60 minutes before bed and try to relax by meditation or dimming the lights.



Connect with family and friends:

Keep physical distance but find ways to stay connected through video chats, texting, phone calls or a surprise drop-off of goodies.



Limit news and social media:

It's okay to stop or take a break from watching or reading news if you are feeling more anxious than informed.



Eat healthy:

Avoid snacking on sugary or fried foods. Try to keep your portions balanced.



Plan activities:

Make plans for safe, fun activities such as starting a hobby or going for a walk or drive.



Limit alcohol and drug intake:

Limit yourself to two drinks per day. Avoid alcohol and drugs to make yourself feel relaxed and instead explore other activities that help you de-stress.



Help others:

Help a family member or friend with a surprise such as dropping off a meal, note or groceries.



Stick to a schedule:

Continue to eat, sleep, take your medications and complete daily tasks at the same time each day.



Move your body:

Schedule at least 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week.



**Spectrum
Health**

Helpful resources for improving your mental health

Phone

- Michigan Community Mental Health: 800.749.7720
- Call 211 for Resources

Apps

- Insight Timer* – Use to help fall asleep or for meditations to feel calmer.
- CBT-i Coach* – Use to help with insomnia.
- PTSD Coach* – Provides action steps to help with anxiety and depression.
- What's Up?* – Provides tips for coping skills.
- Headspace – Helps with meditation, sleep solutions, exercise ideas and more.

Web

- go.edc.org/covid19-resources – Resources for adults, children and specific communities on coping with effects of COVID-19.

Spectrum Health resources

- COVID-19 hotline: 833.559.0659 (option number two for COVID-19 behavioral health support line)
- Helen DeVos Children's Hospital Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine: 616.267.2830
- Outpatient psychiatry and behavioral medicine: 616.447.5820
- spectrumhealth.org/covid19 – COVID-19 resources and patient resources, including behavioral health resources for mental health, stress, anxiety and depression.

Seek help if normal reactions progress

Stress can cause normal reactions to progress to concerning reactions.

Seek help if any of these persist and interrupt your day-to-day life:

- Withdrawal from others
- Feelings of hopelessness that won't go away
- Any thoughts that you would be better off dead or of ending your life
- Drinking/drug use to cope with emotions
- Anxiety that makes functioning difficult

Helpful resources for concerning reactions

Phone

- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800.273.TALK (8255)
- Suicide Prevention Text Line: Text HELLO to 741741

Web

- nowmattersnow.org – Website for crisis situations, including strategies to safely cope with suicidal thoughts.

*Free in your App Store.

For more information about COVID-19, resources and a digital copy of this document, visit spectrumhealth.org/covid19.



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ATENCIÓN: Si usted habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1.844.359.1607 (TTY: 711).

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