

# Coping with Strong Feelings Related to COVID-19

## **Remember that stress, anxiety, fear and strong emotions are normal in times of crisis.**

Remind yourself and others that these feelings will fade. Recognizing how you're feeling can help you take care of yourself, manage your stress and cope with this difficult time. Even when you don't have full control of a situation, there are things you can do.

If you or a loved one are experiencing **any** of these emotions in response to the coronavirus pandemic, help is available. Call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 (1-800-846-8517 TTY); connect with a trained counselor through the Ohio Crisis Text Line by texting the keyword "4HOPE" to 741 741; or call the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services at 1-877-275-6364 to find resources in your community.

During this difficult time, we encourage you to stay informed, take action, maintain healthy social connections and find resources for support. Here are some tips:

## **Manage how you consume information**

Get information from credible sources such as [Columbus Public Health](#), [Franklin County Public Health](#), the [Ohio Department of Health](#), and the [Centers for Disease Control](#).

It's a good idea to stay engaged and informed, but having some limits on your news consumption can help.

- Watching or listening to the same news constantly can increase stress. Reading can be an easier medium to control how much and what kind of information you're absorbing.
- Set limits on when and for how long you consume news and information, including through social media. It may help to choose a couple of fifteen-minute blocks each day when you will check news/social media and limit your news consumption to that time.
- False information spreads very easily on social media and can have serious consequences for individual and public health. Always verify sources and make sure they are reputable, especially before sharing anything.

## **If you are working from home and feel disconnected.**

Structure can help us feel more stable. When your work routine changes, it may help to create other routines that mirror what you'd usually do. Having routines in the morning can be a good way to start your day. Try activities that are healthy for your body and mind, like a walk, exercise, meditation, journaling and eating breakfast.

- Create structure around working from home:
  - Dedicate a space to your work that has few distractions.
  - It may be helpful to dress in work clothes as you usually would.
  - Schedule times when you work and times when you take breaks.
  - Prioritize self-care activities throughout the day such as taking breaks to move and have lunch.
- When working from home, it can be easy to work longer than usual. Create a clear boundary between your work and after-work time.
- Not spending in-person time with colleagues can be challenging and especially isolating for people with mental health challenges and people living alone. While nothing can fully replace seeing people in person, technology can be very helpful. When speaking with colleagues, consider using video instead of just audio, emails or texts.
- Talk with your work colleagues about subjects that are not just work-related or about COVID-19. Have virtual coffee breaks or virtual walks together which can mimic the casual interactions you'd usually have in person.

### **Netcare Access**

*Immediate help for  
adults in crisis*  
614-276-2273

### **Nationwide Children's Hospital**

*Immediate help for youth  
(17 and under) in crisis*  
614-722-1800

### **Franklin County Suicide Prevention Hotline**

614-221-5445

## Stay connected with others and maintain your social networks.

Physical distancing (also called social distancing) is essential to lessening the impact of COVID-19, but it can change how you usually interact with people you care about. There are many ways you can build a feeling of connection, even if you can't see people in person or go places you usually would.

- Make sure you have the phone numbers and emails of close friends and family.
- Stay connected via phone, email, social media and video calls.
- Offer to help others if you can.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Share how you're feeling with people you trust.
- Regularly call, text or email with family and friends who may have more limited social contact such as elderly people, those with disabilities, those who live alone, and those who are quarantined or at high risk because of chronic health conditions.
- If talking about COVID-19 is affecting your mental health, set boundaries with people about how much and when talk you about it. Balance this with other topics you'd usually discuss.
- If you are living with other people, communicate expectations about how to live well together while staying home.
- Participate in virtual activities together:
  - Plan virtual dinners and coffee breaks.
  - Do at-home crafts and activities over a video call.
  - Watch a virtual concert together.
  - Read the same book or watch the same movie/TV show and talk about it.
  - Play online multi-player video games.
  - Join an online exercise class.

## Resources for Help

- Chat online by visiting **NetcareAccess.org** and clicking on *Need support? Chat now.*
- Contact the **Ohio Crisis Text Line** by texting keyword 4HOPE to 741 741.
- Call the **Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services Help Line** at 1.877.275.6364

Information adapted from <https://www.nami.org/covid-19-guide>

4/24/20