

COVID-19 Stigma Resource Guide

COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) is a respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that can spread from person to person. However, fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others, even when they are not at risk for spreading the virus. Help fight stigma by learning the facts about COVID-19.

How to Manage Fear & Anxiety

- **Learn the facts.** The COVID-19 outbreak is a rapidly evolving situation and it's important to stay informed. Refer to vetted and trusted sources for the most accurate and up-to-date information about the virus and how it is spreading, such as:
 - www.cdc.gov/coronavirus
 - www.coronavirus.ohio.gov
 - www.columbus.gov/coronavirus
- **Keep things in perspective.** Limit the time you spend watching or listening to upsetting media coverage. Remember to take breaks from watching the news and focus on the things that are positive in your life and that you have control over.
- **Don't make assumptions about others.** Viruses cannot target people from specific populations, ethnicities or racial backgrounds, and you cannot assume that someone who appears to be of Asian descent has been exposed to the virus. Understand that you cannot tell if someone is at risk for spreading COVID-19 based on how they look.
- **Stay healthy.** Protect yourself from illness by following steps that help to prevent the spread of germs: wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth; cover coughs and sneezes with your arm or inner elbow (NOT your hands); avoid close contact with people who are sick; and stay home when you are sick except to get medical care.
- **Keep connected.** Staying in touch with friends and family can help with maintaining a sense of normalcy, and provide valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress.
- **Seek additional help.** If you feel overwhelming worry or anxiety, seek additional professional mental health support.

(Adapted from [University of California, Berkeley](#))

Take Action against Stigma

- **Speak out** against negative behaviors, including negative and discriminatory statements on social media, about groups of people or the exclusion of people who pose no risk from regular activities.
- **Do not stay silent** if you see someone being treated unfairly.
 - If you feel comfortable doing so, firmly but calmly tell the person who is harassing someone to stop.
 - If you don't want to talk to the person who is harassing someone, you can instead focus on supporting the individual who is being treated unfairly. Make small talk, ask them how their day is going, and ignore the person harassing them.
 - Use these [simple tips for bystanders on how to stop bullying](#).
- **Encourage children** to recognize bullying and how to stop it. Visit www.stopbullying.gov for tools that kids can use to support their peers.
- **Seek additional help.** If you continue to feel overwhelming worry or anxiety, seek professional mental health support.

(Adapted from [Maricopa County, Arizona](#))

Workplace Rights and Reporting Discrimination

State, county and city governments, and other organizations, often have a place to report discrimination. Some resources include:

- [City of Columbus Discrimination Complaint Investigation](#). The Community Relations Commission (CRC) was created to help eliminate discrimination or remove the effects of past discrimination within the City of Columbus.
- [Columbus Division of Police](#). You may file a report for hate crimes or ethnic intimidation with the Columbus Division of Police.
- [Columbus NAACP Discrimination Complaint](#). The Columbus NAACP assists with complaint investigation and makes referrals to other agencies and authorities as necessary.
- [Ohio Civil Rights Commission](#). The Ohio Civil Rights Commission accepts and investigates complaints of discrimination that may be in violation of the State's non-discrimination ordinance.
- [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#). The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee for various reasons including race, color, religion, national origin and more.
- [U.S. Department Of Housing And Urban Development \(HUD\)](#). Through its Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Office, HUD can investigate complaints relating to Fair Housing.
- [U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#). The FBI tracks statistics on and accepts reports of hate crimes. Columbus falls within the Cincinnati Regional Office, which can be reached at (513) 421-4310.

Additional Articles & Resources

- ["It takes all of us to reduce stigma during disease outbreaks."](#) – Washington State Department of Health
- ["Anti-bullying support: The power of peers."](#) – Minnesota Post
- ["Five ways to shut down workplace bullying."](#) – Forbes
- ["Fear and stigma: The epidemic within the SARS outbreak."](#) – PubMed/National Institutes of Health

3/27/2020