Self-Care During a Pandemic

Look inside for:

- Fight Stress with Healthy Habits
- Coping with Stress During the 2019-nCoV Outbreak
- Helping Children Cope with Stress During the 2019-nCoV Outbreak
- How to Cope with Self-Isolation and Quarantine
- Free Online Mental Health Resources During the Corona Virus Epidemic
- Working Remotely During Covid-19- Your Mental Health and Well-being
- 10 Tips for Eating Healthy at Home

April 2020

- At-Home Workouts
- Eating Colors to Control Cancer: National Cancer Control Month

For more information on ways to lead a healthier lifestyle visit our website GetHeathyCT.org *Find us on Facebook and Twitter!*



Special



FIGHT STRESS WITH HABITS

1. Slow down.

Plan ahead and allow enough time to get the most important things done without having to rush.

2. Snooze more.

Try to get seven to nine hours of sleep each night. To fight insomnia, add mindfulness and activity.

3. Let worry go.

The world won't end if a few things fall off of your plate. Give yourself a break and just breathe.

4. Laugh it up.

Laughter makes us feel good. Don't be afraid to laugh out loud, even when you're alone.

5. Get connected.

A daily dose of friendship is great medicine. Make time to call friends or family so you can catch up.

6. Get organized.

Use "to do" lists to help you focus on your most important tasks and take big projects one step at a time.

7. Practice giving back.

Volunteer your time or spend time helping out a friend. Helping others helps you.

8. Be active every day.

Exercise can relieve mental and physical tension. Find something you think is fun and stick with it.

9. Give up the bad habits.

Too much alcohol, tobacco or caffeine can increase blood pressure. Cut back or quit to decrease anxiety.

10. Lean into things you can change.

Make time to learn a new skill, work toward a goal, or to love and help others.

Learn more at heart.org/HealthyForGood



Coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak



It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.

Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.

If you must stay at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contacts with loved ones at home and by email and phone with other family and friends.

Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions.

If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor. Have a plan, where to go to and how to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.

Get the facts. Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as WHO website or, a local or state public health agency.





Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.

Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you to manage previous life's adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak.





Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak



Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawing, angry or agitated, bedwetting etc.

Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention.

Children need adults' love and attention during difficult times. Give them extra time and attention.

Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reasure them.

If possible, make opportunities for the child to play and relax.





Try and keep children close to their parents and family and avoid separating children and their caregivers to the extent possible. If separation occurs (e.g. hospitalization) ensure regular contact (e.g. via phone) and re-assurance.

Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible, or help create new ones in a new environment, including school/learning as well as time for safely playing and relaxing.





Provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the disease in words that they can understand depending on their age.

This also includes providing information about what could happen in a re-assuring way (e.g. a family member and/or the child may start not feeling well and may have to go to the hospital for some time so doctors can help them feel better).

How to Cope with Self-isolation and Quarantine

Introduction: Those who have experienced quarantine or Isolation speak of a series of burdens that take their toll on feeling of well-being. The limiting of natural social contact, the cessation of a natural daily routine and the experience of a lack of control over one's life can be debilitating and exhausting. **The consequences experienced include the following.**

Fear and anxiety: Being in quarantine or Isolation means a loss of control over normal life routine. When we feel things are beyond our control our levels of fear increases because of the risk we perceive. Our anxiety is exacerbated by the worry, not just about one's own health and well-being, but also that of family, particularly if you are a chief carer or bread winner.

<u>Boredom to depression:</u> our work roles form an important part of our personal and social identity and purpose. Being without work, or at least not having our normal rhythm, can lead to feelings of ineffectiveness. The lack of opportunities to use our abilities can dampen moods leading to a general sense of sadness.

<u>Frustration and anger:</u> enforced confinement, restricted movement and not being able to engage in everyday activities elevates frustration levels.

<u>Stigmatization</u>: being identified as being in quarantine or Isolation, whether self-imposed or not, can lead to the experience of feeling stigmatized. Guilt and fear not just about the unknown but how others might perceive us now or in the future adds to the malaise.

Thankfully psychological research offers some insights on how to cope with the feelings associated with this adversity.

(1) Take a proactive approach

Making a plan and identifying what we can control is associated with sense of purpose and progress. Sketch a daily timetable or routine and post it where you and others can see it, as doing so increases our probability of sticking to it. We can manage our moods and feelings, so try to be aware of what you are feeling, and understanding why you are experiencing these feelings is the first step to putting one back in control.

Source: https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2020/0324/1124989-self-isolation-quarantine-coronavirus/

(2) Stay connected

Whether one is extrovert or introvert, we are a social species and connecting with friends and family has positive effects on our well-being. Whether it's text, video chat, social media or phone, just staying connected keeps us centered.While a problem shared may not be a problem halved, there is a host of research to support that sharing concerns with trusted others has significant positive psychological benefits.

3) Focus on your health

While obvious, we sometimes fail to control what we can with reference to our health. Quarantine and isolation s stressful and stress weakens our immune system, so being proactive about staying healthy becomes even more important. Stick to regular meals with the correct nutritional variety and avoid snacking. Anxiety can sometimes prompt us to comfort eat, so we need to manage these urges. Daily exercise will help regularize sleep patterns all of which boosts psychological health. Needless to say, the misuse of alcohol and drugs will not help longer term adjustment despite how the relaxing effect of alcohol may be appealing in a time of stress.

(4) Manage your media consumption

We have learned from the Zika virus crisis in 2016 that those who relied on social media sources such as Twitter recorded higher levels of stress and anxiety than those who depended on traditional media sources for their news updates. In fact, consuming too much media in a crisis situation is associated with increased levels of experienced stress. Restrict your consumption of news and avoid social media and depend on traditional national media with direct lines to the trustworthy medical decisionmakers when accessing news.

If you are subject to quarantine or isolation, remember you are doing so not just for your own good, but that of your community. It is the ultimate act of altruism and it might be said you are among our nation's silent heroes. We owe you and thank you! FREE ONLINE MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES DURING THE CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC

FEELING ANXIOUS OR DEPRESSED? YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Although in-person support groups are not meeting during the Covid-19 pandemic, you still have options to connect ONLINE through audio or videoconferencing. Check out the FREE options below. Be #coronastrong

NEED TO CONNECT?

- Talk to a peer at Soundview Warmline, 800-921-0359, daily from 5pm-10pm
- Free forums & chats at www.7cups.com

SPECIALIZED SUPPORT GROUPS:

- SMART Recovery videoconferences: Ages 18+, Tuesdays at 6; Teens, Wednesdays at 4; ; Family & Friends Thursdays at 6:30; Join at: meetings.ringcentral.com/j/6651939516
- Older adult check-in (Greenwich), 203-862-6700
- Community Mindfulness Project (New Canaan), free meditation daily at 7am, 12n, 7pm: 857-799-9498

SUPPORTS FOR YOUNG ADULTS?

CT's Young Adult Warmline: • Call 1-855-6-HOPENOW daily from 12pm-9pm. (Other times: call Patricia at 860-549-2435)

NAMI Young Adult Connection

 Community check-In, daily from 3:30-4:30pm. Info: Val at vlepoutre@namict.org Hearing Voices Network: Info: Skye at scollins@advocacyunlimited.org

IN A CRISIS?

- Kids in Crisis: 203-327-KIDS
- Text the Crisis Text Line at 741741
- Call the National Suicide
 LifeLineat 800-273-TALK
- Call The Trevor Project (LGBTQ support): 866-488-7386
- Dial 2-1-1, select option 1 for CT's mobile crisis
- Call 911 and ask for a Crisis
 Intervention Trained (CIT) officer

Find more resources and behavioral health treatment options at www.thehubct.org/treatment





Working Remotely During COVID-19:

Your Mental Health & Well-Being

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) is presenting new and unique major challenges. We are navigating unchartered waters with this virus making it important to find new ways to work and interact while also taking care of our mental health and well-being.

Many are teleworking full-time for the first time, isolated from co-workers, friends and family. Our daily living routines are disrupted causing added anxiety, stress and strain physically, mentally, and financially. It is completely natural for this disruption and uncertainty to lead to anxiety and stress. Now more than ever, we all must take care of our mental health and well-being. As we protect ourselves against potential exposure to the Coronavirus, keep in mind that social distancing does not mean social isolation. This resource provides practical tips on taking care of our mental health and well-being.

How do I maintain my health & wellness?

▶ Keep a regular schedule: Create and maintain a routine and schedule. Set up a designated space for you and each family member to work and learn. Don't forget to include periodic breaks for recharging in your schedule. Although everyone's schedule will be different, here is a sample:

Time	Activity
7:00am	Wake up, stretch (take care of kids/animals)
7:30am	Breakfast and family time (technology free!)
8:30am-12:00pm	Work and check on updates with small breaks every 30 minutes or so
12:00pm – 1:00pm	Lunch break, get fresh air, stretch & exercise
1:00pm – 5:00pm	Work with breaks every 30 minutes, check in with co-workers
5:00pm - 7:00pm	Dinner and screen break! Call a friend, family, or loved one
7:00pm - 9:00pm	Self-care time

- Stay connected: Stay connected with family, friends, and support systems using technology like facetime, skype, google hangout and other video-based options. Talk about your fears and concerns with people you trust. Chances are they are feeling the same way.
- ► Keep your immune system strong: Make a commitment to staying strong by:
 - » Washing your hands with soap for 20 seconds (or 2 happy birthdays!)
 - » Getting enough sleep
 - » Eating well and staying hydrated
 - » Taking vitamins
- Prioritize personal hygiene & limit contact with others: This is imperative to avoid spreading the virus. Here's what should be done:
 - » Again, worth repeating, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer regularly.
 - » Use a tissue to cover your sneeze or cough, or when unavailable, cough or sneeze into your elbow.
 - » Disinfect with anti-bacterial wipes areas and objects that are heavily trafficked or are touched regularly where you live and work.
 - » Avoid contact with those who are sick and avoid touching your face - eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - » Stay home when you are sick.
- Exercise & stay active: This is not only good for your physical health, but your mental health too. Periodically, get up and move around your home. Walking, stretching, planks or jumping jacks, whatever works best for you to reduce or alleviate stress and increase endorphins. While our favorite gyms and fitness centers are closed during this time, many are offering free livestreams or app-based workouts for members and the general public, so check online to see what's available.
- Get fresh air: If circumstances allow, go outside for a brisk walk and fresh air, but avoid crowds and close contact with others.

- Stay informed: Knowledge is power and it's good to stay updated on progress being made in combatting the virus. Stay informed on the latest updates from reliable sources like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Limit media consumption: Avoid continuous exposure to news, media, and social media that may trigger or elevate anxiety, stress or panic. Stay informed but limit media consumption.
- Set boundaries on work schedule: When working from home, be sure that you are working reasonable hours. It can be tempting to work more while you have your work at home, however it can also be taxing on your health and well-being, so stick to a schedule with healthy boundaries.
- Distract & redirect: Engage in activities that benefit your well-being, bring you joy and distract you from existing challenges. This might include meditation and yoga, often offered free online. You may also enjoy journaling, reading, art projects, cooking with new recipes, breathing exercises, or listening to a calming podcast or music.
- Get creative: share tips with co-workers and friends on what's working well for you and encourage them to do the same. Come up with new ideas like planning a google hangout at a mutually agreed upon time to exercise together – like 1-minute planks, 10 jumping jacks, whatever you decide, but keep it simple. Share photos of pets on how they are enjoying the new routine. The sky's the limit on creative ways to stay connected.

How do I manage my mental health condition during this challenging time?

The information included above applies to everyone whether you experience a mental health condition or not. Here are additional tips for those diagnosed with mental health conditions:

- **Continue treatment & medication:**
 - » Despite changes in routine, it is extremely important to follow your treatment plan.
 - » If your symptoms change or you need reassurance during this difficult time, call your treating provider's office to see if they are offering virtual visits. Tele-mental health visits are growing and an important way to connect with care.



- » Be sure that medication refills are up to date. If you are concerned about running low, request that your treating health care provider approves a 60-or -90-day supply of medication.
- » Cold and flu medications may interact with antidepressants and/or antipsychotics so consult with your health care provider or pharmacist if you are using over the counter medications.
- ▶ **Responding to symptoms of COVID-19:** If you are feeling symptoms that may be associated with the COVID-19 virus, call your primary care provider first to talk about next steps in care. This virus continues to strain hospital resources so it's best to get directions from your primary care provider on what to do rather than going to an emergency room.
- Recognize warning signs & triggers: Continue to monitor new or worsening symptoms you may be experiencing with either your mental health or overall health and well-being. Do your best to keep your stress level low and engage in activities, like those listed above, that help you manage your stress levels during this disruptive time.
- Engage your support network: Just as you would during other major life changes, stay connected with family and trusted friends and let them know if you need extra support during this challenging time. That might include regular phone calls, check-ins, and related support. Be clear about what you need during this time.

What can managers and HR professionals do to support employees?

With many organizations requiring employees to stay out of the office, it's more important than ever to encourage and facilitate regular communication with employees. Here are tips for managers and human resource professionals in supporting employees in staying connected to the workplace and each other:

► Show empathy & be available: Understand that employees are likely feeling overwhelmed and anxious about circumstances related to the virus. Make yourself available to your staff to talk about fears, to answer questions and to reassure them about work and other issues that might come up.

- Stay connected with communication & meeting tools: Use virtual meeting options with video, like Zoom and JoinMe, for regular check-ins and to allow teams to connect with one another "face-to-face."
- Recognize the impact of isolation & lonelines: Working remotely can cause people to feel isolated, making it more important to routinely check in with your team, not only about their work product, but also to see how they are doing. Loneliness can lead to depression and other mental health issues. Be aware of significant changes you may see in your team member's personality or work product, because it may be a sign that a person is struggling.
- Encourage online training: This is a great time to encourage employees to sharpen their skills with online training. It is also a good distraction to focus on learning rather than worrying about other issues. Find online trainings and new learning opportunities to recommend to employees.
- Check in with your EAP & Health Plan: Check in with your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to confirm their availability and to coordinate support for employees. Remind the staff that the EAP is there if they need support and can connect employees with behavioral health support if it's needed. Also, connect with the organization's health plan(s) to learn what they are offering to support plan members and pass that information onto employees. Be sure to include all relevant weblinks and phone numbers for both the EAP and health plan in communicating with employees.



Links to Additional Helpful and Reliable Resources

CDC:

cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html

APA:

- psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/apa-blog/2020/02/coronavirus-and-mental-health-taking-care-of-ourselves-during-infectious-disease-outbreaks
- psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/covid-19-coronavirus

WHO:

who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af_8

SAMHSA:

samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf

NAMI:

nami.org/getattachment/Press-Media/Press-Releases/2020/COVID-19-and-Mental-Illness-NA-MI-Releases-Importan/COVID-19-Updated-Guide-1.pdf?lang=en-US

SUPPORT & LIFELINES:

If you are experiencing high levels of stress, anxiety or depression, reach out for support.

- » Crisis Text Line: Text 741741
- » National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **1-800-273-8255**

For more resources on workplace mental health, visit the Center's website: **workplacementalhealth.org.**



10 Tips For Eating Healthy When You're Working From Home

Keeping your nutrition in check can be tough when your home is your office. You feel comfortable and there's plenty of food available. And unlike in the office, you're free to graze all day and the fridge is all yours. But this habit can wreak havoc on your waistline, sabotage weight loss and halt your productivity. Here are strategies and hacks for eating healthy while working from home.

#1: Don't work in (or near) the kitchen. Try to set up your desk in an area that's not near the kitchen. You might be tempted to wander over and check the fridge (for the tenth time) if it's constantly in your line of vision. Decide that the only time you'll be in your kitchen during the workday is when you're getting ready to have a planned snack or meal.





<u>#2: Plan your snack and meal times.</u> Just as you schedule and plan out the rest of your day (get up, workout, shower), establish when throughout the day you're going to eat. If you know you like to eat lunch around noon, plan for that. Treat food like you would in the office. You can't be grazing all day long when you're there – so act the same way at home.

#3: Make sure you actually eat. Once you hit the ground running, err, working, it can be hard to take a break to actually eat. But it's important to know your hunger signs and realize that not eating can affect your alertness and productivity. If needed, set an alarm on your phone to remind you to get up and eat something.



#4: Meal prep your lunches. There's something freeing about being able to whip up whatever you want to eat for lunch. But for some people, the freedom is too much, especially when it comes to weekday lunches. If you can, try to meal prep your lunches ahead of time, just like you would on days you physically go to work. It doesn't need to be anything fancy either. A bag of lettuce, precut veggies, grilled chicken and nuts is a simple form of meal prep that takes out all the guess work.

#5: Focus on real food. Balanced, nutritious food makes us more productive. It keeps us fuller longer and helps us focus. Understand that what you eat will impact your mood and energy level. Think about this the next time you're feeling hungry and just want to grab a handful of chocolate from the pantry. Focus on protein, fiber, healthy fats, fruits and veggies. Planning a menu ahead of time will make it easier to avoid noshing on whatever looks tastiest and quickest in the moment.



Tips For Eating Healthy When You're Working From Home Continued

#6: Drink plenty of water. Dehydration can lead to headaches and fatigue, which are both not good for your productivity. Just as you'd fill up a water bottle at the office to keep at your desk, keep water next to your work station at home too. If you have water readily available, chances are you're more likely to drink it, helping you reach your goal of at least 64 ounces per day. (And PLEASE stay away from sugar-loaded soda and juice, both of which can cause you to crash later.)





#7: Be careful of too much caffeine. Having access to endless cups of coffee might seem like a great idea, but tread carefully when it comes to caffeine. Too much is known to cause headaches, anxiety, digestive issues and even fatigue – none of which are ever good, but particularly not good when you're trying to work. Aim for no more than two cups of coffee per day to avoid the jittery feeling and avoid flavored creamers and other high calorie add-ins!

<u>#8: Don't buy junk food.</u> Don't stock your fridge or pantry like a vending machine. This can lead to eating just because you can! Try you best to keep junk food out of your house, especially foods you know can trigger a binge for you. Out of sight, out of mind.





<u>#9: When you eat, just eat.</u> You might be tempted to continue working through your lunch break now that your co-workers aren't physically there. Bu don't do it! Being distracted during a meal can lead to over-eating and decreased satiety (satisfaction and fullness) from the meal. Instead, take a break from work to sit down at a table to enjoy your lunch and relax for a few minutes. You'll enjoy the meal more, and it may even help you feel more prepared for the rest of your work day.

#10: Portion out snacks and meals before eating. Never eat out of the bag or original container, as it's much harder to control portions that way. Check the serving size on the container if you need extra guidance. For meals, try the healthy plate method: Fill half a 9-inch plate with non-starchy vegetables, one-fourth the plate with a lean protein (poultry, seafood, beans, eggs, tofu, cottage cheese or Greek yogurt) and one-fourth the plate with a high fiber carbohydrate (fruit, whole grains or starchy vegetables).



Source: https://health.clevelandclinic.org/10-tips-for-eating-healthy-when-youre-working-from-home/

At-Home Workouts

Yes, you can get fit without stepping foot in a fitness club.

No time to get to the gym? Signing up for a membership isn't in the budget? Don't sweat it. You can get a good workout without setting foot in a fitness center.

Oblique Crunches

You'll tone your waistline with this move, which works the internal and external obliques, the muscles on the sides of your abs.

1. Lie on your right side with your knees bent.

2. Place your right arm on the floor in front of you and your left hand behind your head.

3. Keeping your knees together, raise your knees toward the ceiling as high as you can, bringing your left shoulder toward your knees.

- 4. Hold for 3 seconds.
- 5. Return to the starting position.
- 6. Do 15 reps.
- 7. Repeat the move on the opposite side.

Oblique Crunches

Plié Toe Squats

In this twist on a traditional squat, you'll work your calves, thighs, and glutes.

1. Stand with your feet a little more than hip-width apart, toes turned slightly out, and hands on your hips.

2. Keeping your spine straight, lower your body as if you were going to sit in a chair.

3. While you're lowering into the squat, lift your heels off the floor.

4. Hold 5 seconds.

5. Return to a standing position, keeping your heels lifted off the floor.

6. Do 15 reps.





Eating Colors to Control Cancer: National Cancer Control Month

April is National Cancer Control Month! This month is meant to promote lifestyle changes through diet, nutrition, and physical activity to significantly reduce the risk of developing some types of cancer.

The National Cancer Institute recommends an overall healthy diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, unprocessed meats, and whole grains with regular physical activity to maintain a healthy weight.

Fruits and vegetables are rich in vitamins, fiber and antioxidants which protect the healthy cells of the body, while promoting the death of cancer-causing cells. The more colorful fruits or vegetables are rich in a variety of antioxidants. A variety of plant based fibers help maintain a healthy digestive tract and reduce inflammation.

The United States Department of Agriculture's guidelines recommend that recommend that half your plate be full of colorful fruits and vegetables, and a quarter of your plate healthy grains/starches, and a quarter lean unprocessed protein. Using USDA's MyPlate guide, here are some antioxidant and fiber rich grains, fruits and vegetables, and lean meats to add to your plate:



Calories: 285; Total fat: 21g; Saturated fat: 3g; Sodium: 229mg; Carbohydrates: 27g; Fiber: 7g; Sugars: 11g; Protein: 3g