

# MANAGING STRESS & ANXIETY DURING COVID-19

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful, causing fear and anxiety and evoking strong emotions. Caring for one another and coping effectively with stress will make you, your loved ones, and our entire community stronger.

**Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:**

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

**People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms.**

**Things you can do to support yourself**

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- 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.

**Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.**

Knowing and sharing the facts about COVID-19 and understanding the actual risk to yourself and people you care about can make an outbreak less stressful.

Learn more about taking care of your emotional health.

**NAMI Offers These Tips for People Living with Mental Illness:**

1. Unsure about attending therapy sessions outside the home? Ask your health care provider about teletherapy or mental health services online.
2. Worried about access to prescribed medications? Ask your health care provider about getting 90-day supplies vs. a 60 or 30-day supply. Refill your medications as soon as allowed. *If healthcare providers deny/decline making accommodations, challenge the decisions at least three times, health plan requirements may change if/as conditions worsen.*
3. Listen to and follow your local public health care provider expectations.
4. Provide self-care, especially if in the higher risk population as defined by the CDC. Pay attention to emerging symptoms. Reach out to family and friends.