

Coping During a Crisis

The COVID19 pandemic has thrust us into unknown territory. Many people are facing unprecedented challenges at home including fear of illness, unemployment, financial strain and difficulty adjusting to the “new normal.” During these trying times the steps you’re taking to protect yourself and your family, while necessary, can create additional stress. Behavioral Health Dallas providers want to support you in staying mentally and physically well while remaining at home. To that end, we would like to share some strategies to manage shelter-in-place and social distancing recommendations that have been helpful for others. We hope these tips will lighten your burden and remind you to hope.

- **Create a daily schedule** – When things feel out-of-control or unknown, anxiety can escalate. Regain a sense of control by creating predictability and stability in your daily routine. Get up at the same time and go to sleep at the same time each day. Take a shower and get dressed in the morning. Try to eat meals at around the same time each day.
- **Maintain healthy sleep habits** – Pay attention to your circadian rhythm, your natural body clock. Maintain a consistent sleep schedule. Open windows during the day and keep your home dark at night. Try to resist the urge to stay up later than normal watching television or movies.
- **Exercise daily** – Worry and stress can contribute to physiological changes in your body that prepare it for movement. Exercise can mitigate symptoms of stress in the moment as well as contribute to improved mood and decreased stress on after the fact. Check out some of the free exercise apps that are available right now or consider taking a 20-minute walk around the block.
- **Go outside daily** – Research has shown that being outdoors in nature can boost mood. It’s also helpful to change your scenery and continue moving throughout the day.
- **Practice self-care** – This may normally be at the bottom of your to-do list, but right now it’s more important than ever. Participate in activities that are fulfilling and rejuvenating to you. Practice mindfulness, meditation, prayer, journaling, yoga, or reading. Anything that you enjoy and gives you a sense of peace will help.
- **Stay connected to the world around you** – We all know the feeling of losing track of the date or time on a vacation; that’s fun when you’re on the beach, but less helpful in our current climate. In the morning, ground yourself in the present, look at the calendar, make yourself aware of the date and time. Pay attention to the news enough to be informed, but resist the urge to check constantly for updates. Stay connected with communities and organizations with which you’re normally involved through video conferencing and taking advantage of live streaming and other efforts.
- **Stay connected socially** – social connection is foundational to well-being and mood maintenance. It’s very important to stay in touch with friends and family during this time. Even if you’re not a tech person, now is the time to give it a try.
- **Continue to enjoy things** – Allow yourself to enjoy small daily experiences. Negative thoughts and feelings can become more overwhelming if we ruminate on them. Give yourself a break by engaging your mind actively in enjoyable tasks, a favorite movie or reading a new book. Allow yourself to have fun while cooking your favorite dinner or spending extra time with your kids. Identify things for which you are grateful. Allow space for hope.



While the future is unknown the steps you take each day can contribute to a safer tomorrow for yourself and the world around you. Remember we are all in this together.

If you are in need of additional support please take a look at the resources outlined below from the American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	(800) 273-8255	National Graduate Student Crisis Hotline	(877) 472-3457
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Spanish)	(888) 628-9454	National Sexual Assault Hotline	(800) 656-4673
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Options for Deaf and Hard of Hearing)	(800) 799-4889	Child Abuse Hotline	(800) 422-4453
Crisis Text Line	Text HELLO to 741741	CDC National HIV & AIDS Hotline	(800) 342-2437
National Domestic Violence Hotline	(800) 799-7233	Alcoholics Anonymous	(202) 966-9155
Veterans Crisis Line	(800) 273-8255	Narcotics Anonymous	(800) 543-4670
		Gamblers Anonymous	(855) 222-5542

If you feel you are in need of professional support at this time, please know that many institutions and private practices are providing full services via telehealth. To learn more about your options, you are welcome to contact Behavioral Health Dallas or you might review local and national psychologists' listings through the following resources:

Dallas Psychological Association:

<https://www.dpadallas.org/index.php/resources/find-a-psychologist>

American Psychological Association:

<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/crisis>



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