



MONTEREY
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Helpful Tips on Managing Mental Health during the Coronavirus Outbreak

It is essential to take care of our mental health amidst the stress and anxiety that can arise with the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19). The more you stress, the more vulnerable you can become to viruses as stress weakens your immune response. Practicing self-care to address symptoms of anxiety, depression, and maintaining our mental health is vital to ensure our physical health and wellness. Here we share some ideas to practice self-care, as well as a few resources:

- **Deep Breathing and Meditation:** Breathe in into your diaphragm and out slowly through your mouth. Do at least 5 breaths at a time. Practice meditation to reverse the stress response and support immune function.
- **Maintain Physical Activity:** Daily exercise can help promote feelings of well-being and boost your immunity. Lower your stress levels by maintaining simple daily movement. Try to find ways to walk around in open air or maintain your regular exercise routine to keep yourself moving and reduce stress.
- **Prioritize Good Sleep:** Well-rested folks have stronger immune systems to fend off viruses. Get at least 7-8 hours of natural, restful sleep.
- **Eat Well:** Eating healthier meals rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety as well as boost your immune system.
- **Be Mindful of Social Media Use:** While it is important to stay informed, being on our cell phones and computers can heighten anxiety and cause us to obsess over the news. Constantly checking the news can exacerbate symptoms of depression, PTSD and trauma. Try unplugging from the news and social media and use a mindfulness app (Headspace or Calm) instead to reduce stress and anxiety.
- **Wash your hands. Embrace the elbow bump:** Taking preventative actions can help reduce your risk and relieve anxiety. During an outbreak, proper hand-washing is your best defense against a virus. Wash for 20 seconds or more using soap and water. Or use hand sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol. Minimize touching your eyes, nose or mouth to reduce risk. In addition, you may want to minimize hugging and hand-shakes and embrace the elbow bump.



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Resources:

Monterey County Behavioral Health: 1-888-258-6029

Provides counseling and assistance with Behavioral Health referrals. Answered 24/7 with after-hours calls answered by a clinician.

Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-877-663-5433

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Available 24/7

California Peer-Run Warm Line: 1-855-845-7415

Peers with lived experience of mental health challenges provide emotional support and referrals to mental health resources. Call or chat online. Available 24/7.

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Line: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

And here are additional resources available through SAMHSA:

- [Tips for Survivors of a Disaster or Other Traumatic Event: Managing Stress](#)
- [Tips for Survivors of a Disaster or Traumatic Event: What to Expect in Your Personal, Family, Work, and Financial Life](#)
- [Tips for Talking With and Helping Children and Youth Cope After a Disaster or Traumatic Event: A Guide for Parents, Caregivers, and Teachers](#)
- [Tips for College Students: After a Disaster or Other Trauma](#)