

Managing Adult Stress During a Pandemic

Our current situation is overwhelming, and stressors may be coming at you from many different directions -- caring for those in your immediate household, worrying about those you cannot be with, managing work demands, concerns about your household budget, information overload. People respond to stress in different ways. Take time to think about your own response to the current situation. Think about how you are feeling, what you are thinking, and how you are behaving. We all need strategies for pressing pause and managing the stress that pops up all around us. Check out the following tips, see which ones work for you, and try to build them into your daily life.

As A caregiver to a young child, you are VERY important. Adults need to take care of themselves so that they can take care of others, including young children.

MAINTAIN A CONSISTENT ROUTINE – MINDS AND BODIES THRIVE ON ROUTINE AND KNOWING WHAT IS COMING NEXT. IT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY WHEN POSSIBLE.

- Keep bedtimes and wake-up times as consistent as possible. Get ready in the morning as you always would.
- Eat well-balanced meals when you typically would.

PAY ATTENTION TO UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS THAT ADD TO YOUR STRESS, THEN SHIFT YOUR FOCUS.

- Instead of thinking, "This is all so awful," try shifting your thoughts to "This is a very difficult time, but it won't last forever." Rather than thinking, "I can't handle this for one more day!" try thinking, "I can take this one day at a time. This isn't easy, but I can handle this today."
- For more information: https://www.ptsd.va.gov/covid/COVID_helpful_thinking.asp

FIND WAYS TO RELAX. TRY DIFFERENT APPROACHES AND SEE WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU.

- Progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing, and meditation can help reduce tension and stress and settle your mind.
- For more information:
<https://www.calm.com/blog/take-a-deep-breath>
<http://www.delcohsa.org/TIC/relaxation-techniques.pdf>
<https://insighttimer.com/>: free meditation app
https://www.ecmhc.org/relaxation_exercises.html (English and Spanish)

BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE.

- Take walks, go for a run, or just go outside and move your body. Do yoga.
- Download a free fitness app or find fitness videos online.

SOCIAL DISTANCING DOES NOT MEAN SOCIAL ISOLATION! ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT MEET WITH PEOPLE IN PERSON, BE SURE TO STAY CONNECTED WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

- Video chat. Talk on the phone. Send texts or emails.

WHEN YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED, TAKE A BREAK. IT IS OKAY FOR CHILDREN TO SEE YOU FEELING UPSET AND TAKING TIME FOR YOURSELF TO MANAGE STRONG EMOTIONS. BY DOING SO, YOU ARE HELPING YOURSELF AND MODELING HEALTHY EMOTION REGULATION FOR THEM. TELL CHILDREN THAT YOU ARE FEELING STRESSED AND NEED TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO CALM DOWN.

And importantly, if the effects of stress are frequent and occurring for a long duration of time, seek support from a doctor or other trusted members of your community.