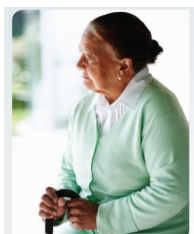


# Managing Anxiety and Distress While Staying At Home

Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include:



- ◇ Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19
- ◇ Children and teens
- ◇ Caregivers
- ◇ People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders
- ◇ People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use

## 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 conditions.**

## REDUCE STRESS IN YOURSELF AND OTHERS

### 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.
- ◇ Use resources that have been made available for you, such as exercise videos.
- ◇ Connect with others through phone calls, or social media. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling



**If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call:**

- ◇ National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- ◇ San Joaquin County Crisis Phone (available 24/7): 209-468-8686
- ◇ 911
- ◇ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517)

## FOR PARENTS

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

**Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include:**

- ◇ Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- ◇ Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting)
- ◇ Excessive worry or sadness
- ◇ Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- ◇ Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens
- ◇ Poor school performance or avoiding school
- ◇ Difficulty with attention and concentration
- ◇ Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- ◇ Unexplained headaches or body pain
- ◇ Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs



## There are many things you can do to support your child:

- ◇ Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- ◇ Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- ◇ Limit your family’s exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- ◇ Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- ◇ Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well.
- ◇ Connect with your friends and family members.



## MORE RESOURCES TO HELP WITH MENTAL WELL BEING:

- ◇ Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health During an Infectious Disease Outbreak: <https://bit.ly/2JnQmEI>
- ◇ Coping with Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks: <https://bit.ly/3buBaI8>
- ◇ Talking With Children Tips for Caregivers Parents and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks : <https://bit.ly/2ycqppc>
- ◇ Coping After Disaster Children's Book: <https://bit.ly/2UjS4Nx>