Mental Health & Wellness During COVID-19

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. 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.

How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in. Some people may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis.

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

HOW DO I MANAGE MY MENTAL HEALTH DURING THIS CHALLENGING TIME?

- **Engage your support network.** Just as you would during other major life changes, stay connected with family and trusted friends and let them know if you need extra support during this challenging time. That might include regular phone calls, check-ins, and related support.

- **Recognize warning signs & triggers.** Continue to monitor new or worsening symptoms you may be experiencing with your mental health or overall health and well-being. Do your best to keep stress levels low and engage in activities that help manage your stress during this disruptive time.

- **Continue treatment.** Despite changes in routine, it is extremely important to follow your treatment plan. If your symptoms change or you need reassurance during this difficult time, call your treating provider's office to see if they are offering virtual visits. BHS is covering telehealth through 5-31-2020. Be sure that medication refills are up to date. Cold and flu medications may interact with antidepressants and/or antipsychotics. Consult with your health care provider or pharmacist if you are using over the counter medications.

- **Responding to symptoms of COVID-19.** If you are feeling symptoms that may be associated with the COVID-19 virus, call your primary care provider first to talk about next steps in care. It is best to get directions from your primary care provider on what to do rather than going to an emergency room.

If you are concerned about your mental health, don't hesitate to seek advice. BHS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 800-245-1150.

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