COPING WITH COVID-19

A Guide To Self-Care During Social Distancing
The spread of Covid-19, and efforts to contain the outbreak, has significantly impacted daily life.
As a result of these traumatic events, it is not uncommon to experience a broad range of emotions...
...and, physical reactions to this new and challenging situation.
Although many aspects of life may be beyond your control at the moment, there are a few practical steps you can take to keep your emotional responses from becoming too overwhelming…
Maintaining a daily routine can provide predictability and order when life feels chaotic.
TIPS FOR DEVELOPING & MAINTAINING A ROUTINE

- Use a calendar or day planner to create a schedule a daily schedule.
- Utilize reminders or alarms to stay on track.
- Schedule future activities so you always have something to look forward to.
- Include pleasurable activities in your day.

Many museums, outdoor attractions, and performance groups are offering virtual tours/performances that you can attend right at home!
A FEW IDEAS…

- Learn A Language
- Exercise
- Bake/Cook New Recipe
- Learn New Craft
- Dance
- Play Online Game
- Take Photographs
- Create A Puppet Show
- Meditate
- Read
- Write Letter/Poem/Story
- Organize Drawer/Closet/Room
- Color/Paint/Draw
- Re-arrange Furniture
- Start New T.V. Series
- Take A Virtual Tour
- Go Outside
- Garden/Yardwork
- Pamper Self
- Watch Animal Live Streams
- Watch Movies
- Play A Board Game
- Make A Puzzle
- Build With Legos
- Make A Scrapbook/Collage
- Spring Clean House
- Listen to Podcasts
- Start A Journal
- Take An Online Class
- Sing/Join Virtual Choir
- Make A Time Capsule
- Learn A Magic Trick
- Listen to Music
- Make Music
- Make A Movie/Stop Motion Video
- Video Chat With Friends/Family
- Host Digital Netflix Party
- Make 'Top 10' Lists (Books/Movies/T.V.) & Share
- Create Indoor Scavenger Hunt
- Live Stream Northern Lights
- Virtually Tour USA’s National Parks
- Stream Metropolitan Opera
- Stream Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
- Live-Stream Zoos & Aquariums
- Virtually Tour A Botanical Garden
- Take An Online Cooking Class
- Listen To Audio Book from Audible
- Take Online Music Lessons
- Take Online Ghost Tour
- Stream Broadway Performance
- Learn Origami
- Play Cards
- Volunteer
- Research & Donate To Charities
- Decorate Windows For Neighbors To See
- AND THE LIST GOES ON & ON & ON...
Practicing social distancing limits our usual methods of human interaction. However, finding new ways to communicate with friends and family can protect against feelings of loneliness or isolation.
TIPS FOR MAINTAINING SOCIAL CONNECTION

Humans use vocal and facial responses from others to help regulate mood.

• Schedule to Communicate Daily
  • Make a list of people to connect/re-connect with and schedule virtual plans.
  • Consider engaging in shared daily activities virtually (e.g. making meals, playing games, watching movies, reading stories, making music).
  • Remember, checking-in is a way of offering support to others in need.

• Use Video Platforms (e.g. Zoom, VA Video Connect, Skype, Facebook Messenger, Google Hangout)

• Attend Virtual Religious Services, Support Groups, Social Media Groups
  • Vetsprevail.org
  • Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance
  • WVAMC Spirituality Group Mondays 9:30-10:30 AM. (VANTs Line 1-800-767-1750, Access #12968)
  • NA, AA, 12-Step Support, Smart Recovery, SAMHSA

• Smile & Wave
  • Drive/walk around your neighborhood and greet others in from across the yard or through the window!

• Cuddle with pets
When the environment feels threatening, the brain releases chemicals to prepare the body to protect itself. Finding constructive ways to use the body’s natural defense system will serve to rebalance these chemical reactions and likely alleviate associated tension.
Hormones released in response to stress motivate us to act. However, using reason will enable us to determine constructive ways of using this energy.

Getting Physically Active

- Walk
- Run
- Bike
- Skate/Rollerblade
- Yoga
  - Yoga Nidra Thursdays 8-9 p.m.; Call VANTs line 1-800-767-1750, enter #24953
- Tai Chi
  - Schedule with MSA for VVC Tai Chi:
    - Tues 11-12 for Rehab
    - Tues 1-2 for Arthritis
    - Thurs 11-12 for Energy
- Qi Gong
- Dance Party

Doing Things That Feel Useful

- Start A Project
- Learn A New Skill
- Prepare Meals
- Attend To Household Chores
- Offer Support To Loved Ones
- Donate
- Volunteer
  - Delaware Options
  - National Options

Remember, do not underestimate how doing your part to stop the spread of the virus is useful to EVERYONE!
 Feeling overwhelmed may lead to efforts to numb emotional pain. While this may provide temporary relief, it can ultimately lead to harmful behaviors and disorientation.

Regularly finding ways to bring personal awareness to the present moment will allow for effective responses to stressors.
TIPS FOR CONNECTING MIND & BODY

• Avoid alcohol and other non-prescribed substances.

• Notice your thoughts and feelings.

• Bring awareness to your body through your 5 senses as a means of grounding.

• Focus your attention on that which is in your control (thoughts, behaviors).

• Fully participate in activities that align with your identity and values.

Mindfulness & Relaxation Resources:

• COVID COACH (app.)
• PTSD Coach (app.)
• ACT Coach (app.)
• Mindfulness Coach (app.)
• Progressive Muscle Relaxation
• Phone Based Mindfulness Class Friday 11am-12pm Call VANTs line 1-800-767-1750 enter 54220#
• https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/circle-of-health/power-of-the-mind.asp Guided mediations
• https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Manage_Stress.asp Streaming relaxation resources
• https://www.warrelatedillness.va.gov/meditation/ Yoga Nidra Recordings
• https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/ (Problem Solving, Parenting, Anger Management, Sleep skills)
• https://mobile.va.gov/appstore/veterans (VA Apps- Mindfulness, Mood, CBT-I, Pain, Quit Smoking, MOVE)
• https://medschool.ucsd.edu/som/fmph/research/mindfulness/Pages/Mindfulness-and-Compassion-Resources.aspx Mindfulness and Compassion Resources (includes a schedule of streaming online mindfulness and compassion sessions as well as recordings; UC San Diego - Center for Mindfulness)
• Yoga: Veterans Yoga Project; Kula For Karma, Yoga Journal, Warriors at Ease, Comeback Yoga, Mindful Yoga Therapy
• Tai Chi: 7 Minute Chi, Tai Chi Fundamentals: Standing, Tai Chi Fundamentals: Adaptive with Walking/Walker Aid, Tai Chi with Tricia Yu
Given current events, and associated emotional reactions, many people are feeling unsafe. Attending to personal self-care will improve one’s sense of security.
TIPS FOR CREATING SAFETY

- Take care of your body.
- Limit exposure to stressors.
- Create personal and physical boundaries in the home.
- Comfort self.

**Physical Health**
- Balanced Diet
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Avoid Substances
- Hygiene
- Face Mask

**Limit Exposure**
- Too much information can be overwhelming.
- Seek information only from reputable sources.
- Limit media exposure to 1-2 hours a day.

**Create Boundaries**
- Create privacy times/zones in the home.
- Make small adjustments to differentiate workspace from personal space.

**Comfort**
- Engage in soothing activities.
- Do things that make you feel good about yourself.
Remember, you are NOT alone!
By practicing the steps described here, you will get through this!

**Additional Resources**
(click on underlined links to be redirected)

- Veteran’s Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255, Press 1
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)
- Staying Safe During Covid-19
- SAMHSA’s National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP
- Manage Stress Workbook
- SAMHSA’s Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, & Isolation
- NAMI Covid Resource Guide
- Managing Stress Associated with the COVID-19 Virus Outbreak
- Whole Health Resources
- VA Apps & Online Mental Health Resources
- What You Need To Know About Coronavirus
REFERENCES

Harris, R. (2020, April). *Face covid: How to respond effectively to the corona virus.*
