

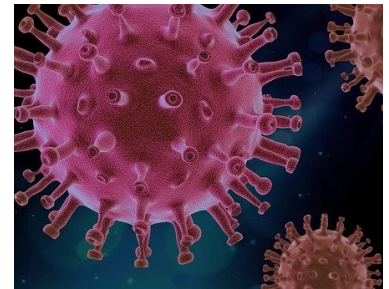
## A Newsletter for Employees and Their Families

# Tips on Dealing with COVID-19

**W**ith coronavirus (COVID-19) now a global pandemic, anxiety and stress levels may be higher than normal for many people. Here's what you need to know about COVID-19 and mental health, and how to keep yourself calm during the outbreak.

**Why COVID-19 is tough on your mental health:** There's so much uncertainty around what's going to happen with COVID-19 that people are understandably feeling anxious. Jobs may be at risk, elderly family members are vulnerable, and many of us are now forced to change our daily routines. What's more, we're constantly flooded with news, statistics, and fresh emergency guidelines, and it's mentally draining for everyone. So, how do we combat all this stress and stay calm?

- 1:** Practice self-care. With so much beyond our control right now, focus on what you can control. Get more sleep, read a new book, have a warm bath, or take a walk somewhere quiet (while maintaining social distance). Now is the time to prioritize your well-being.
- 2:** Limit social media use. Set limits on how often you use social media, especially if you're at home where it's tempting to check in more often. Don't let a constant stream of tweets, status updates, and conflicting opinions overwhelm you.
- 3:** Read only reliable news sources. Stay informed by reading only reliable sources, such as government websites, the WHO, and the CDC. Other news sources may be less accurate, and they may cause feelings of panic and concern.
- 4:** Talk it out. Acknowledge any stress or anxiety you're feeling right now, and ask others how they're coping. Talk to family and friends, and make sure you check in with how your kids are feeling.
- 5:** Reach out to coworkers. Now is the time for coworkers to come together. Focus on maintaining positive morale at work, and if you're working remotely, set regular meetings.



### Handling self-isolation and quarantine

- 1:** Maintain your routine. It's important to maintain a sense of normalcy, where possible. If you're working remotely, check in with coworkers, and try to stick to a typical daily routine. You never know – you might even be more productive than usual!
- 2:** Stay in touch where possible. Whether you use video chats, emails, or voice calls, check in with family, friends, and colleagues regularly. Send each other gifs, have virtual movie nights, and keep your spirits up.
- 3:** Ask for help If you're feeling lonely, or you need help getting supplies during the isolation period. Reach out to coworkers and your local community. You'd be surprised how many people are willing to help at a challenging time like this.
- 4:** Look after your body. Don't neglect your body just because you're stuck at home. Try out meditation, yoga, or other at-home workouts, and eat nutritious meals – your body needs all the support it can get right now.

Everyone reacts to stressful situations and changing circumstances differently, and it's natural to feel overwhelmed right now. Take care of yourself, your family, your friends, and your coworkers, and don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it. Remember, we're all in this together.

Call us at **425-454-3003** or **800-648-5834** for help and support. Due to social distancing we are offering telephone and tele-mental health (HIPAA compliant video) sessions to you and your dependent family members.

Source: Work Excel and Coronavirus.gov

# Managing Your Sobriety While Social Distancing

**M**anaging your sobriety during this very stressful situation can be a challenge. If you are enrolled in a treatment program for alcohol and/or drugs, please check with your treatment provider about their requirements for you to stay current with their program. Many have online options to help you stay in compliance and free from using drugs or alcohol during this unprecedented time. Once the social distancing requirements have been lifted, the virus subsides and/or you have returned to work and the in-person treatment programs resume, you will be required to remain compliant if you signed a Last Chance Agreement with your employer.

You can also seek support from your family doctor or self-help groups such as AA. While many groups are not meeting in person, they can assist you with one-to-one phone support, sponsorship and additional supportive resources.

If you are having difficulty staying clean and sober, please contact the Washington Recovery Helpline at 1-866-789-1511 . For further assistance, feel free to call us at the EAP at 425-454-3003.

## Living With Mental Illness during COVID-19

**J**ust as individuals with pre-existing physical illness are more likely to get physically ill from the coronavirus, people whose mental health is compromised are at greater risk of experiencing worsening mental illness as a result of the coronavirus – no matter what their mental illness may be.



Clinical anxiety is a concern at times like this. It is understandable and expected that people will experience worry and stress during this time. However, for individuals living with mental health conditions, it is important to know when these natural emotions are becoming anxiety. Anxiety is a treatable clinical condition that should not be left untreated. Testing for anxiety is simple and takes just a few minutes. It can be done at home using the free, anonymous, and confidential online tools at [www.mhascreening.org](http://www.mhascreening.org).

If you are on medication, make sure you have enough medication on hand. It is very important that you continue to take your prescribed medication. If you stop taking it suddenly your symptoms may dramatically increase. Typically prescriptions can be filled a week or so before they run out. Refill them on the first possible day, because that can buy an extra few days of lowered stress about a prescription running out and not being able to get to the drug store to fill it. Contact your pharmacy to see if they provide delivery services or if they can provide you a longer supply (90 days vs 30 days.)

Utilize resources like:

**Crisis Text Line:** (Text MHA to 741741)

**Disaster Distress Hotline:** 1-800-985-5990 or text TALKWITHUS to 66746

**Online support groups** (Like the Mental Health America [Inspire community](https://www.mhacommunity.org)).

We are here to help. Call us at Fully Effective Employees 24/7 to talk with a professional counselor.

Source: Mental Health America

© Fully Effective Employees 2020. *FEE is a confidential Employee Assistance Program provided by your employer to you and your dependent family members. We offer assessments, referrals, and case management for personal and work-related problems. Contact a counselor 24/7 at 425-454-3003 or 1-800-648-5834. Visit us online at [www.fee-eap.com](http://www.fee-eap.com) and contact us for your user ID and password. There you'll find online assessments, resources, referrals, articles, archived newsletters, payroll stuffers and much more. Use of the website is confidential.*

# Helping Your Child During COVID-19

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. With schools 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.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

For more information on how to talk with your kids about COVID-19 visit: [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

Here are links to useful information on ways to navigate living through this outbreak with your kids:

<https://www.common sense media.org/resources-for-families-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

<https://www.today.com/parents/how-homeschool-during-coronavirus-crisis-t176020>

<https://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources-for-schools-and-families-during-covid-19-coronavirus/>

<https://www.harpercollins.com/childrens/at-home-resources-for-kids-and-families-during-coronavirus-2020/>