

Coping with COVID-19 Stress



Living with uncertainty during the outbreak of COVID-19 is stressful for everyone. Health, financial and other concerns can increase anxiety. Things that were normal a few weeks ago are no longer the norm. Physical distancing (also called social distancing) makes it impossible to see friends or visit family in person. At this time, we need to adopt “distant socializing”, which involves the creative use of technology, phone lines and the mail to connect. But it’s not the same. The Vermont Department of Mental Health has compiled some tips to help us get through this unsettling time.

GET THE FACTS

What we know about COVID-19 is rapidly changing. Misinformation spreads fast. We need trustworthy information from reliable sources like:

- [Vermont Department of Health](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control](#)

It helps to limit our exposure to media sources or social media that lead to fear or panic.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

The COVID-19 outbreak can add to existing daily challenges. It is normal for an outbreak to be stressful. [Let’s be kind to ourselves](#)

when feelings of anxiety or isolation increase. We can treat ourselves as kindly as we treat loved ones. Interrupt negative thoughts by thinking about an accomplishment or something nice we did for someone else.

IDENTIFY THE SOURCE OF YOUR ANXIETY

This may seem ridiculous. Obviously, it's COVID-19. But what specifically is worrying? Is it the uncertainty, the health risk to ourselves or our loved ones, or our financial burdens? Identifying specific concerns can help us get distance and feel less overwhelmed.

LET YOUR ANXIETY BE A UNIFYING FORCE

So, we've recognized things are uncertain, acknowledged our specific worries, now what? Mental health experts recommend connecting with others, asking for what we need and offering help. Use technology to make connections. A simple phone call or an online meet-up (like FaceTime, Skype or Zoom) with family or friends can be supportive and ease loneliness. Or join [Front Porch Forum](#)

to help people in your community or post your own request.

SELF-CARE IS KEY

Taking time for ourselves is even harder when faced with an emergency. It may feel like just one more thing to do. But taking a walk, practicing [stress reduction techniques](#)

, like yoga or mindfulness, or reading a fun book or article can shift our mood. It can also strengthen our immune system.

MAINTAIN HEALTHY ROUTINES

COVID-19 and concerns about getting sick change our daily routines. Having our day-to-day practices disrupted or even ended for a while can be a source of anxiety. Starting today, we can create new routines that support our well-being. Begin the day with a walk outside or a workout, build in healthy breaks throughout the day, and then choose fun evening activities like watching a movie, writing in a journal, playing a musical instrument or a game, and of course, talking with friends and family on the

phone or an online platform. Adding fun activities and exercise to our new routines can help alleviate isolation and disruption.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES

What if you are isolated (or quarantined) with your abuser? Reach out for the help you need. Law enforcement are continuing to respond to calls. Hotlines and shelters will remain open. Contact the Vermont Network for more information about your local organization.

- [Vermont Network](#)
- Vermont Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-228-7395
- Vermont Sexual Violence Hotline: 800-489-7273
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-7233
- If you're unable to speak safely: Log onto thehotline.org
- or text LOVEIS to 22522
- If you are in an emergency situation: Call 911

NEED SUPPORT NOW?

- Text VT to 741741
- Call 2-1-1 or 1-866-652-4636
- Contact the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
- or call 1-800-273-8255
- For multilingual support call 800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746

MORE RESOURCES

- [VT Helplink:](#)
- Free and confidential alcohol and drug support and referral services.
- [Staying Mentally Healthy During Self-Isolation or Quarantine](#)

- (Vermont Department of Mental Health)
- [Preparing for the Coronavirus by Taking Care of Your Whole Self](#)
- (Vermont Department of Mental Health)
- [Coronavirus and Emerging Infectious Disease Outbreaks from The Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress](#)
- (Vermont Department of Mental Health)
- [Coping with Stress During the 2019-nCoV Outbreak](#)
- (World Health Organization)
- [Managing Anxiety and Stress](#)
- (CDC)