SELF-ISOLATION SURVIVAL GUIDE

GETTING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

IN AFFILIATION WITH THE CEP CLINIC AT NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY
We hope that this survival guide is a helpful resource for you as we go through this crisis together. We are sending you positivity and wishing you the best during this time.
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Stress & Anxiety

The current pandemic can cause us to feel stressed and anxious for numerous reasons. Although this is a normal reaction when going through a crisis or difficult time, it can still be very scary. It is important that we have some knowledge and skills about stress and anxiety and how to cope with the. Here are some signs that you may be feeling stressed, some common stressors and ways to cope with them.

**Possible Stressors During This Hard Time**

- **Working from Home:** Lack of motivation, time management, how to prioritize tasks
- **Learning Online (especially for people who do not prefer online classes):** Difficulties with concentration, lack of stable internet and equipment, problems with communication
- **Staying with Family:** Boundary issues, privacy, balancing work and relationship with family members
- **Staying Alone:** Lack of connections, loneliness, losing track of time
- **Loss of Jobs:** Financial stress, lack of food, supplies and/or even a place to live
- **Becoming Primary Caretakers:** Taking care of others while stressing out, worries and fear of losing loved ones
- **Taking Care of Children:** Helping children maintain their schedule, home schooling, explaining the pandemic to children, managing children’s anxiety and worries while balancing your work at the same time
- **Fear towards the Virus:** Anxiety of getting the virus (self and loved ones), how life will continue after the pandemic
- **Lack of Support in General**
- **Others __________**

*We are all so unique and so are our stressors!

**How Do I Know When I’m Anxious or Stressed?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Stress</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worrying more often than normal</td>
<td>Unexplained sadness, irritation, or fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expecting the worst to happen</td>
<td>Inability to remember important dates, deadlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased headaches, nausea, vomiting</td>
<td>Losing track of time, being in a daze</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tension in your body</td>
<td>Lack of positive emotions (feeling happy, feelings of love)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>Blaming yourself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling tired, having trouble sleeping</td>
<td>Trouble sleeping, concentrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling irritated</td>
<td>Feeling angrier than usual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficulty concentrating</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear of losing control or “going crazy”</td>
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Stress Management & Self-Care

Managing Anxiety and Worries During Quarantine

1. Reframe “I am stuck inside” to “I can finally focus on my home and myself”
   a. Think of the mandated work-from-home policy as an opportunity to refocus your attention from the external to the internal.
   b. Do one productive thing per day can lead to a more positive attitude.

2. Stay close to your normal routine or Create a new routine
   a. Try and maintain some semblance of structure from the pre-quarantine days.
   b. Wake up and go to bed around the same time, eat meals, shower, adapt your exercise regimen, and get out of your PJ’s.
   c. Why not do something special during these quarantined days?
      i. Start a daily journal to jot down thoughts and feelings to reflect on later
      ii. Take a walk every day at 4pm
      iii. Connect with your family/friends over FaceTime every morning
      iv. Start a watercolor painting which you can add to everyday
      v. Anything you would like to do!

3. Avoid obsessing over endless Coronavirus coverage
   a. Choosing only certain credible websites for a limited amount of time each day to get information about the pandemic

4. A chaotic home can lead to a chaotic mind
   a. Keep the inside organized, predictable and clean.
   b. Set up mental zones for daily activities can be helpful
      i. Try not to eat in bed or work on the sofa – just as before, eat at the kitchen table and work at your desk.

5. Use telehealth as an option to talk to a professional if your anxiety and worries become unmanageable
   a. Licensed Psychologists over HIPAA-compliant video chat platforms:
      http://adaa.org/finding-help/telemental-health
Self-Compassion

Self-Compassion for Caretakers:
Due to the current situation you may have had to take on a new role in your life. For some that means becoming a caregiver and others it means becoming a fulltime caregiver to those you were already providing some care for. This can be a challenging situation during less stressful times, but the added stress of the current pandemic can make this even more stressful. If you are currently in a position where you are providing care to others, which most definitely includes being a family member! There are times you may need to reenergize yourself, so you can continue to provide others with the care they need but that starts with providing yourself with the care that you need. It is important for you to find times on and off the job to take care of yourself. For an exercise and tips on how to do this, click on these links:

- [Taking Care of the Caregiver](#)
- [Self-compassion for Caregivers](#)
- [Psychology Today: Self-compassion for Caregivers](#)

Mindfulness Self-Help Book:
The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook – Kristin Neff & Christopher Germer (2018)
Here is an example of the exercise in the book (2018):

**Finding Loving-Kindness Phrases**
1. What do I need?
   a. To start, please put a hand over your heart, or elsewhere, and feel your body breathe.
   b. Now take a moment and allow your heart to open gently – to become receptive – like a flower opens in the warm sun.
   c. Then ask yourself this question, allowing the answer to arise naturally within you:
      i. What do I need? What do I truly need?
      ii. If this need has not been fulfilled in a given day, your day does not feel complete.
      iii. Let the answer be a universal human need, such as the need to be connected, loved, peaceful, free.
   d. When you are ready, write down what arose for you.
2. What do I need to hear?
   a. Now consider: What do I need to hear from others? What words do I long to hear because, as a person, I really need to hear words like this? Open the door of your heart and wait for words to come.
   b. If I could, what words would I like to have whispered into my ear every day for the rest of my life — words that might make me say, “Oh, thank you, thank you” every time I hear them? Allow yourself to be vulnerable and open to this possibility, with courage. Listen.
   c. Now, when you’re ready, write down what you heard.

3. What do you want to know for sure?
   a. If you like, you can reframe your words as wishes for yourself. For example:
      i. “I love you” can become the wish “May I love myself just as I am.”
      ii. “I’m here for you” can become the wish “May I feel safe and secure.”

4. What did you notice while you did this exercise? Were you surprised by what you needed? How do you feel about the phrases that emerged?

5. With gratitude there is no more longing. We are complete. The heart is at rest.

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**Dealing with Grief and Loss**

The COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately left some of us dealing the loss of friends, family members, social interaction, certain freedoms, and possibly just an overall sense of grief. This can be very difficult to deal with in general but for some of us we are not able to grieve in the traditional ways that we are used to such as; going to our place of worship, gathering with friends and family, practicing traditional rites. This can be very frustrating and add to the stress and sadness you are already feeling. Grief and Loss can feel like such a lonely experience, especially now as we are self-isolating. It is important for you to remember that you are not alone, and everyone deals with loss in different ways. Some people, need to talk to other, some like to be
alone, some avoid their feelings, and that’s okay. There is no right way to deal with loss, so it is important that you allow yourself the space and time to deal with your loss in the best way you know how and remember to practice self-compassion. If you are struggling with loss, here are some resources that can be helpful to guide you through this difficult time:

- HelpGuide: Coping with Grief and Loss
- Mental Health America: Bereavement and Grief
- APA Grief: Coping with the loss of your loved one
- The Ways We Grieve | Psychology Today

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**Daily Quarantine Questions**

1. What am I **GRATEFUL** for today?
2. Who am I **CHECKING IN ON** or **CONNECTING WITH** today?
3. What expectations of “normal” am I **LETTING GO OF** today?
4. How am I **GETTING OUTSIDE** today?
5. How am I **MOVING MY BODY** today?
6. What **BEAUTY** am I either **CREATING**, **CULTIVATING**, or **INVITING IN** today?
The Mindful Pause

Whenever you find yourself feeling stressed, take a moment to pause. Take one deep breath. Let your eyes drift down, focusing softly on the ground or whatever is in front of you. You also can close them. Simply notice yourself breathing for the next 10 seconds. Now, ask yourself: how can I use one of my character strengths right now?

Find out what your character strengths are! Then, the flow is simple:
1. Pause with one deep breath
2. Notice your breath for 10 seconds
3. Apply your strength(s) to the moment

Taking Care of Your Family

Explaining COVID-19 to Kids
The coronavirus pandemic is frightening for everyone, especially children. Here are some resources written in kid-friendly language to help your little ones feel secure in a time of uncertainty.

Comic Book for Elementary Kids
#COVIBOOK

Helping Kids Cope With Negative Reactions

English
Español
Parenting, Working, Teaching – Oh, My!
Balancing the demands of parenting and working from home or finding unemployment resources is hard enough. Add teaching to the list, and striking balance is difficult indeed. Here is a list of resources to help your children stay on track educationally.

English Language Arts activities for kids, from 1st grade to high school
- Free worksheets
Khan Academy, an online learning tool for all subjects and all grades
- Set up parent account and track assignments
- Free YouTube videos explaining thousands of subjects
- Daily schedules for students across grade levels

Immigration, Mixed-Status Homes, and Undocumented Communities
Is somebody in your family a recent immigrant? Does somebody you care about lack documents? Here are resources to help them during COVID-19.
Remember:
- “Immigrants can continue to access services at community health centers, regardless of their immigration status, and at a reduced cost or free of charge depending on their income.”
- “Federal guidelines prohibit immigration agents from conducting arrests or other enforcement actions at health care facilities, such as hospitals, doctors’ offices, health clinics, and urgent care facilities.”

Find low-cost healthcare in New Mexico
Find free clinics in New Mexico
Taking Care of Your Health

Need a healthy distraction? Check out this big list of pleasurable activities.

Safety Tips to Prevent The Spread of COVID-19

- Clean your hands often. Use soap and water and wash hands for at least 20 seconds, or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Maintain a safe distance (6 feet apart) from anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Don’t touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Wipe down frequently used items such as: phones, car keys.
• Wear masks when you can and practice proper care when putting them on and taking them off.
• Wear gloves but remember not to touch your face with them or personal object. Wash your hands after removing them and wipe down personal items you may have touched.
• Cover your nose and mouth with your bent elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
• Stay home if you feel unwell.
• Try to limit going out especially in large groups and engage in social distancing when you can,
• If you have a fever, a cough, and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention. Call in advance.
• Follow the directions of your local health authority.

For more information, check out the following links:

Some Tips on Staying Active and Healthy During The Pandemic

• **Physical Health:** It is important to stay active during this time to strengthen our immune systems. Try to find a physical activity that you enjoy such as; yoga, dancing, running, home workouts, to keep you active. Here are some YouTube links to different exercise pages:
  - Workout page: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFjc9H89-RpWuISldO7AQ
  - Yoga: https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene
  - Dance Workouts: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLi37FJmOtrj1R0fTaqRH6XH5BKEudlOJq

• **Mental Health:** It is important that we are also taking care of our mental health as well as our physical health. During a time of crisis, it can be really difficult to prioritize ourselves and our mental health, and some of us may be experiencing increased mental health struggles. It is important to find ways to take care of ourselves. Here are some resources to help you get the help you may need:
  - Licensed Psychologists over HIPAA-compliant video chat platforms: http://adaa.org/finding-help/telemental-health
  - Find a psychologist: https://locator.apa.org/
  - Find a therapist: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists
  - Get mental health help: https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help
  - Call for help at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), M–F, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST: 1-866-615-6464
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
Finding Support Online

YouTube
- 15 Self Care Ideas for Coronavirus Quarantine: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOxpQ94Euc
- Self-Compassion: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kfUE41-JFw&t=3s
- Calm Meditation YouTube Channel

Relaxation apps
1. Calm (free): Guided Meditations
2. Headspace (free): Guided Meditations and Mindfulness Techniques
3. Insight Timer (free): Guided Meditations and Soundtracks for Relaxation
4. Simple Habit (free): 5-minutes Meditation
5. Colorfy (free): Coloring Books for Relaxation
6. UCLA Mindful (free): Guided Meditations

Other Online Resources
- Find a psychologist: https://locator.apa.org/
- Find a therapist: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists
- Get mental health help: https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help
- Call for help at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), M–F, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST: 1-866-615-6464
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- NMSU Social Services: https://daca.nmsu.edu/social-services/
- NMSU Social services and Outreach: https://wellness.nmsu.edu/social-work-services-overview/
- Crisis Assistance: https://wellness.nmsu.edu/crisis-assistance/
- Self-Compassion: https://self-compassion.org/
- Mindful Self- Compassion: https://centerformsc.org/
- Mindfulness: https://www.mindful.org/
- Aggie Health and Wellness Center: https://wellness.nmsu.edu/
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233; 1-800-787-3224 (TTY) En Español
- National Domestic Violence website: https://www.thehotline.org/help/ (They offer free online chat and other resources)
- NMSU CEP Clinic: https://cep.nmsu.edu/affiliated-programs/cep-odonnell-clinic/ (does not handle crisis situations and only in operation in the fall and spring semesters)
- NM Connect app: https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nmconnect/id1505881354
TAKE CARE
- ELLEN, CORY & COCO