

Managing Stress During COVID-19



During this time when we are asked to be socially distant from people we care about it is even more important to take care of ourselves emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and physically.

Below are some strategies for managing stress during this unique situation.

Explore New Ways To Connect

Social distancing doesn't have to mean complete isolation. In fact that is not recommended at all. Reach out to friends and neighbors via phone, text, video chat. Find groups on-line that may interest you. Check in on the people you love more so than you might normally. This is a great time to pick a couple each day to call and talk.



There is a difference between isolating and feeling isolated. If you start to notice that you are feeling more withdrawn, sleeping more, not connecting with friends or family, force yourself to connect. The more you do, the better you will feel. Just one phone call or one text. Physical distance doesn't have to mean emotionally distant.



Stay Physically Active

Stay as healthy as you can and be as active as you can. Gyms are closed yet many of them are finding ways to stream classes on line. There are tons of work outs offered on platforms such as YouTube. Look some up and give them a try. Go for a walk or a run. Find ways to keep your body healthy and strong. You don't need a lot of fancy equipment. Try looking for workouts that use just body weight. Yoga is a great way to de-stress and stay physically fit.

Fuel Your Body

If you are home for long periods of time it can be easy to eat more often and eat more comfort foods that are not very healthy. Be mindful. Try to eat as you normally would. Take this time to cook when maybe you wouldn't have the time to normally. Start up family meals again. Experiment with new recipes. If you live alone, Video Chat with someone at dinner time and eat with them while you talk about your day. Try to continue to follow good nutrition habits as best you can.



Structure Your Day



Whether you are working from home or are home and not working, set up a structure for yourself. Try to get up at the same time each day. Make a plan for your morning, afternoon and evenings. If you are working, set up your day as if you are at work and plan some good breaks. If you are not working, plan tasks around the house you will do and what times you will do them. This will help keep you moving, keep you from over eating and keep your mind occupied to make the day go by faster. Schedule in some time for phone calls to check in on people and keep connected.

Be Informed

Get updates on what is happening locally and nationally and then shut off the TV, radio, podcast, etc., and do something else. It is really easy to get sucked into the constant news cycle. This can be taxing on the nervous system so pick one or two times a day you are going to check in with the latest updates. Make sure you get information from reliable sites such as the CDC, World Health Organization, maine.gov, or your Local News Channel. Once you get the updates, turn off the platform and go about your day. This will keep your anxiety and stress levels down and give you more of a sense of control.



Connect To Self



Discover old and new hobbies. This is a good time to reconnect to things you used to do but haven't had time for. Or maybe try something you always wanted to but haven't. Maybe there is a book you bought and haven't got the chance to read. No matter if it's old or new activities, you have time to start doing some and trying them out. Structure something into your day. Trying something new, also helps keeps you more in the present which is something that keeps the "what ifs" away.

Stay Grounded

If you notice that you're feeling more anxious than normal or feeling like you can't focus, take a moment and breathe. Try gripping your feet, curl your toes under and release two or three times and then let them flatten out where you stand. Remind yourself where you are and what you have to do. Maybe step away from what you're doing and go for a walk. Play with a pet. Check in with yourself and see what you need and then get it.



Explore Spiritual Health



Stay connected to your spiritual side. No matter what it is. Though many churches have canceled live services, many are on-line. Talk to members of your spiritual community. Create chat groups, look up on-line resources, and keep up with as much of your spiritual routine as you can in your own way. Check in on people and keep connected.

Access Mental Health Services

If you have a counselor and have not connected with them because you don't want to go into the office, give them call. PCHC therapists are able to provide Telehealth options. You can still get services and remain safe in your home.

If you are struggling and have an emergent Mental Health need, please call the Crisis Line at 1-888-568-1112.

