

## **MENTAL HEALTH TASKFORCE RESOURCES**

- \* Caring For Our Older Adults through COVID-19**
- \* Fear & Anxiety during times of Coronavirus**
- \* Keeping the “Social” in Social Distancing During COVID-19**
- \* 7 ways to help manage your Stress**
- \* Resiliency**
- \* Compassion Fatigue**
- \* Understanding Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

# Caring For Our Older Adults through COVID-19

## What are the risks?

- ✚ According to the CDC, **8 out of 10** COVID-19 related deaths are adults 65 and over.
- ✚ Given the risk, individuals 65 and over are being asked to stay at home.
- ✚ Loved ones are also being asked to physically distance themselves from older adults.
- ✚ This can inadvertently lead to negative effects of social isolation in older adults, such as:
  - Increased depression and anxiety
  - Worsening medical problems
  - Increased risk for suicide

## What we can do:

Remember, we need to ***physically*** distance not ***socially*** distance from older adults.

- ✚ Make sure older adults have access to technology and know how to use it.
  - Arrange weekly virtual get-togethers (e.g., Zoom, FaceTime, FB Messenger, Google, etc.)
  - Telephone calls work too.
  - Try to talk mostly about non-COVID related topics and remind them to stay in touch with friends too.
- ✚ Encourage older adults to maintain, or establish, a regular schedule: wake time, mealtimes, activities, and bedtime.
- ✚ Encourage physically distant outdoor activities (e.g., walks) and remind them to wear a mask and hand hygiene. Also encourage them to engage in indoor exercises.
- ✚ Make sure basic needs are being met (e.g., groceries, medication, telehealth appointments)
- ✚ Stay in contact with nursing facility or personal care home.
- ✚ Encourage seniors to limit exposure to news and watch other forms of television.
- ✚ Encourage activities: arts/crafts, self-soothing activities, deep breathing, yoga, relaxation.

## Resources:

- For questions regarding your **mental health** needs please call: **281-238-3079** or visit [www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/bh](http://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/bh)
- For a list of **resources** available in Fort Bend, please visit: <https://www.sugarlandtx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23964/COVID-Resources-for-FB-County-4720?bidId=>
- From the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>
- For information on **Meals on Wheels** for Seniors, please visit: <https://fortbendseniors.org/>
- For information on **suicide prevention**, please visit: <https://texasuicideprevention.org/>
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: **1-800-273-8255**

# Fear & Anxiety during times of Coronavirus

## Anxiety symptoms during an infectious disease outbreak can include

- ✚ Fear and worry about one's own health and the health of loved ones
- ✚ Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- ✚ Difficulty concentrating, not feeling in control
- ✚ Feeling numb, and unable to engage
- ✚ Worsening of chronic health problems
- ✚ Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

## What can we do to cope?

- ✚ Minimize News Media, if it stresses us out
- ✚ Connect with others, remember social distancing doesn't mean social isolation
- ✚ Use Video apps to avoid touch starvation
- ✚ Take breaks to unwind
- ✚ Eat Healthy & sleep well
- ✚ Exercise
- ✚ Avoid drugs & Alcohol
- ✚ Stay Positive and Optimistic
- ✚ Seek help, if needed

## Free Mental Health Apps:

- \* What's Up: a CBT app For depression anxiety
- \* Mood Kit: also a CBT app for depression anxiety
- \* Mind Shift: for kids with anxiety
- \* Self help for anxiety management (SAM)
- \* Talkspace online therapy for depression
- \* PTSD coach
- \* Liberate (free content created by & for people in the African American diaspora)
- \* Intimind (Spanish language, free and subscription)
- \* Headspace (free and subscription)
- \* Calm (free and subscription)
- \* Simple Habit (subscription)

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- Visit [www.mhahouston.org](http://www.mhahouston.org) for all mental health resources in our area
- COVID Mental health support line from Harris Center 833-986-1919
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: **1-800-273- TALK (8255)**

# Keeping the “Social” in Social Distancing During COVID-19

## What is the risk?

- ✚ The CDC and the WHO recommend that we do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19 by:
  - Engaging in proper hand hygiene and disinfecting surfaces often
  - Wearing masks in public and avoiding touching our face
  - Staying home if possible
- ✚ However, staying home means we have had to distance ourselves from extended family and friends, which can lead to social isolation
- ✚ Prolonged social isolation and loneliness have been associated with:
  - Depression and anxiety
  - Distress
  - Medical problems
  - Substance use/abuse
  - A rise in domestic violence
  - Thoughts of death and suicide

## What we can do:

- Stay connected with others even if you do not “feel” like it
  - Remember it is about “**distantly socializing**” not social distancing!
  - Plan virtual get-togethers, have virtual game nights, coordinate virtual book clubs, etc.
  - Talk, text, email, FaceTime/Zoom/Skype with friends and family
- Stay active (i.e., indoor and/or outdoor exercises)
- Try to stick to your regular mealtimes and sleep schedule when possible
- Focus on things within your control (e.g., hand hygiene, socializing, acts of kindness, etc.)
- Find meaning during this difficult time
  - Safely get involved in your community (e.g., check-in on older adults, donate)
  - Foster a pet from a shelter
- Stay informed but limit how much news you are watching
- Engage in self-care (e.g., arts/crafts, deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, journaling, attend virtual religious services, etc.)
  - Remember to take care of you so that you can take care of others!

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- For a list of resources available in Fort Bend, please visit: <https://www.sugarlandtx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/23964/COVID-Resources-for-FB-County-4720?bidId=>
- For information about **Alcoholics Anonymous** meetings in Fort Bend county visit: <https://aahouston.org/locations/fort-bend-club/>
- From the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
- For information on suicide prevention, please visit: <https://texassuicideprevention.org/>
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: **1-800-273-8255**
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: <https://www.thehotline.org/> or call **1-800-799-7233**

# 7 ways to help manage your Stress

## Is Stress Normal?

- ✚ Stress is a body's method of reacting to a challenge
- ✚ Small amounts of stress may be desired, beneficial, and even healthy
- ✚ Positive stress helps improve athletic performance. It also plays a factor in motivation, adaptation, and reaction to the environment
- ✚ Excessive amounts of stress, however, may lead to bodily harm. Stress can increase the risk of strokes, heart attacks, ulcers, dwarfism, and mental illnesses such as depression
- ✚ Over 70% people will suffer from stress in their lifetime

## Stress can cause:

- Fatigue (51%)
- Anger or short temper (50%)
- Sleep disturbances (48%)
- Anxiety (45%)
- Headache (44%)
- Depression (35%)
- Stomachache (34%)
- Muscle Tension (30%)
- Appetite changes(23%)
- Difficulty concentrating
- Medical issues like High blood pressure, Obesity, Heart Disease,
- Abuse of drugs and alcohol, excessive smoking

## 7 E's to Help Manage Stress

- **Exercise:** get regular exercise (walking, yoga, team sports)
- **Express:** talk, laugh, cry, and express anger when appropriate
- **Enjoy:** discover hobbies, events, and activities, volunteer
- **Explore:** let out your feelings (journaling, creating art projects, visiting museums)
- **Engage:** spend quality time with friends and family on a regular basis
- **Energize:** sleep is essential for a healthy mind and body (get at least 6 hours per night)
- **Eat:** maintain a healthy diet and avoid substances of abuse

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# Resiliency

## What is Resilience and Why is it Important

- Resiliency is the ability to **adapt** and **overcome** challenges
- Ability to “**bounce back**” from trauma, tragedy, personal, life challenges
- A factor in our becoming stronger, **wiser, and more personally powerful.**
- Resiliency is a protective factor for reduced risk of abuse and neglect and for better outcomes for children and families

## What Can We Do to Build Resiliency?

- **Build your connections**
  - Prioritize relationships
  - Join a group
- **Foster wellness**
  - Take care of your body
  - Practice mindfulness
  - Avoid negative outlets
- **Find purpose**
  - Help others
  - Be proactive
  - Move toward your goals & Look for opportunities for self-discovery
- **Embrace healthy thoughts**
  - Keep things in perspective
  - Accept change
  - Maintain a hopeful outlook
  - Learn from your past
- **Seek help**

## Resources:

Websites: <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>  
<https://child.tcu.edu/building-resilience-in-the-aftermath-of-natural-disasters/#sthash.Fu48AbKR.dpbs>  
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

- **Texana Center 24 Hour crisis Hotline ( 1-800-633-5686)**
- COVID Mental health support line from Harris Center **833-986-1919**
- Visit [www.mhahouston.org](http://www.mhahouston.org) for all mental health resources in our area
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: **1-800-273- TALK (8255)**
- For additional information about mental health services, call **281-238-3079**

# Compassion Fatigue

## What is Compassion Fatigue?

- ✚ A state of physical, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion.
- ✚ Compassion Fatigue is caused by burnout and the stress of witnessing and/or hearing about the traumatic experiences of others.
- ✚ Compassion fatigue can affect a wide range of professions who regularly work in a helping or healing capacity such as health care professionals, social workers, and clergy. It can also apply to caregivers and parents.
- ✚ Compassion Fatigue affects the ability to be effective at work and relate to loved ones and friends.

## Signs of Compassion Fatigue

- Disconnection and detachment
- Anger and irritability
- Anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating
- Decreased empathy and sympathy
- Sleep problems (e.g. nightmares, increased or decreased sleep)
- Feelings of powerlessness
- Unexplained physical symptoms
- Relationship problems
- Poor job satisfaction

## The ABCs of Thriving as a Caregiver:

- A: Attention to your own personal signals of distress (e.g. dizziness, hunger, emptiness)
- B: Break-take a break to focus on personal needs
- C: Care for your self by keeping a daily routine, staying connected with others, keeping a positive attitude, using self care tips to improve your wellbeing (e.g. 7 E's to Help Manage Stress, prayer, meditation, etc.)

## Resources:

- 7 Ways to Help Manage Your Stress, A. Shah, MD, Fort Bend County Mental Health Task Force
- Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services, Compassion Fatigue
- Psychology Today, S. Babbel, MFT, PhD, [www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/somatic-psychology/201207/compassion-fatigue](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/somatic-psychology/201207/compassion-fatigue)
- Association of American Medical Colleges, M Jablow, [www.aamc.org/news-insights/compassion-fatigue-toll-being-care-provider](http://www.aamc.org/news-insights/compassion-fatigue-toll-being-care-provider)
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# Understanding Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

## What are symptoms of PTSD?

PTSD can occur at any age and is directly associated with exposure to trauma.

- ✚ Reliving the event or flashbacks: unwelcomed, distressing memories about the trauma
- ✚ Avoiding specific things that remind you of the event. For example: a specific location, sounds, or smells
- ✚ Depression, negative thoughts, and loss of interest
- ✚ Feeling on edge and jittery. This could include trouble sleeping or concentrating, always being on the lookout (hypervigilance), irritable, and startled easily.

## What we can do to cope:

- ✚ Recognize symptoms and reach out for support and professional help
- ✚ PTSD is traditionally treated with therapy using techniques such as group therapy, EDMR, exposure therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- ✚ Medication paired with therapy
- ✚ People with PTSD may also experience anxiety, depression and substance use. Addressing these co-occurring disorders is important.
- ✚ Avoid recreational drugs and alcohol use.
- ✚ Connecting with others that have PTSD to ask questions and share thoughts
- ✚ Practicing mindfulness to bring yourself back to the present moment.
- ✚ Practicing healthy lifestyle habits, such as a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and a consistent sleep schedule.

## Resources:

- The National Alliance on Mental Illness offers an online discussion groups <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions/Posttraumatic-Stress-Disorder/Discuss>
- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/index.shtml>
- <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions/Posttraumatic-Stress-Disorder>
- National Center for PTSD: <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/> or call 1-866-948-7880
- **Texana Center 24 Hour crisis Hotline ( 1-800-633-5686)**
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