

# News from Psychological Services

## SELF-CARE DURING COVID-19

### MANAGING CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) ANXIETY

- For You**
- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage
  - Connect through calls/text/internet
  - Add extra time for daily stress relief
  - Practice self-care
  - Focus on your mental health

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- For Kids**
- Reassure them that they're safe
  - Let them talk about their worries
  - Share your own coping skills
  - Limit their news exposure
  - Create a routine & structure

- For Quarantine/Isolation**
- Keep in contact with your loved ones via social media, texts, and phone calls
  - Create a daily self-care routine
  - Keep yourself busy: games, books, movies
  - Focus on new relaxation techniques

#### According to the CDC:

It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during and after a disaster. Everyone reacts differently, and your own feelings will change over time. Notice and accept how you feel. Taking care of your emotional health during an emergency will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family. Self-care during an emergency will help your long-term healing.

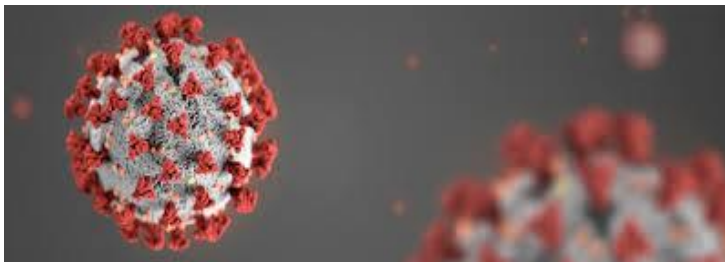
**Take care of your body**– Try to eat healthy well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep.

**Connect with others**– Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships and build a strong support system.

**Take breaks**– Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Try taking in deep breaths. Try to do activities you usually enjoy.

**Stay informed**– When you feel that you are missing information, you may become more stressed or nervous. Watch, listen to, or read the news for updates from officials. Be aware that there may be rumors during a crisis, especially on social media.

**Avoid too much exposure to news**– Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeatedly.

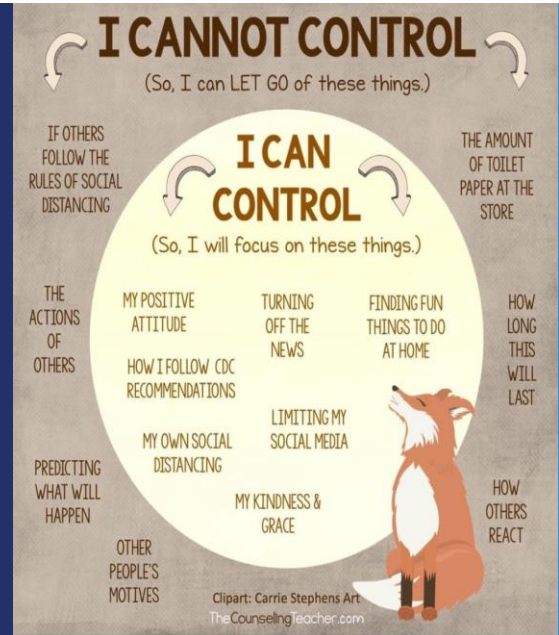


### SEEK HELP IF NEEDED

If distress impacts activities of your daily life for several days or weeks, talk to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor, or contact the SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) helpline at 1-800-985-5990

## Mental Health and Exercise

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), there is an abundance of evidence that supports the benefits of exercise, specifically with managing anxiety, depression, and/or overall mental health. "When we're spooked or threatened, our nervous systems jump into action, setting off a cascade of reactions such as sweating, dizziness, and a racing heart. People with heightened sensitivity to anxiety respond to those sensations with fear. [Researchers] reasoned that regular workouts might help people prone to anxiety become less likely to panic when they experience those fight-or-flight sensations. The body produces many of the same physical reactions – heavy perspiration, increased heart rate – in response to exercise." According to researchers, exercise is similar to exposure treatment as people learn to associate the symptoms with safety and not danger. Additionally, researchers suspect that exercise alleviates chronic depression by increasing serotonin or brain derived neurotrophic factor. Another theory suggests exercise helps by normalizing sleep, which is known to have protective effects on the brain.



## Call Center and Student Crisis Hotline

The GCS COVID-19 call center operates Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The GCS call center can be reached at **336-332-7290**. This is for questions from students, parents and the public about school closures, distance learning, special education, food assistance locations, how people can help, etc.

The GCS Student Crisis Hotline operates 24-7 and is staffed by GCS counselors, social workers, school psychologists and those trained to assist students in crisis. (This does not replace 911 for emergencies.) the student crisis number is **336-332-7295**.

## Stay connected with us!



GCS Psychological Services



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## According to the Child Mind Institute, here are ways to discuss the coronavirus (COVID-19) with children as well as ways to manage and alleviate stress:

**Keep routines in place:** Even when you are at home all day, it is important to stick to a regular schedule. Consistency and structure are calming for children (and adults!).

**Be creative about new activities and exercise!** Add new activities to your routine that children can look forward to. As shared above, exercise provides excellent benefits for adults and children. Examples are taking a daily walk, bike riding, yoga- these are great ways for kids to burn off energy and stay active.

**Manage your own anxiety and watch out for "catastrophic thinking"!**

**Keep kids in the loop, but keep it simple:**

"Talking to children in a clear, reasonable way about what's going on is the best way to help them understand," says Dr. Busman. "But remember kids don't need to know every little thing." Unless kids ask specifically, there's no reason to volunteer information that might worry them.

**Stay in touch virtually.** Let kids use social media (within reason) and Skype or FaceTime to stay connected to peers even if they aren't usually allowed to do so. Communication can help kids feel less alone and mitigate some of the stress that comes from being away from friends.

**Avoid too much exposure to news-** Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeatedly. Try to do enjoyable activities and return to normal life as much as possible and check for updates between breaks.

# Quarantine Bucket List

- FaceTime a workout with a friend. Take turns being the workout leader. Have FUN with it (think Richard Simmons!) 
- Hang a line in your home where you can clip and display all the art you make during social distancing. Paint, draw, display... Corona Gallery! 
- Memorize a famous poem and dramatically perform it via a video call app for friends and family. 
- Paint rocks and leave them around your neighborhood for others to find on their walks. 
- Organize your make-up collection. Throw away all the old stuff you don't use anymore. 
- Keep a journal of this history-making event. Record all the little details. 
- Have a pillow fight. 
- Make an epic blanket fort. Add snacks. Watch a movie from inside. 
- Pamper yourself with an in-home spa night. 
- Clean out the junk drawer. 
- Put pajamas on at 5 p.m. and relax for the rest of the night. 
- Send a handwritten note to someone who could use some love. 
- Call a friend with a video call app and read them a bedtime story. 
- Complete a jigsaw puzzle in one sitting and time yourself. Challenge someone to beat your time. 
- Learn a new card game. 
- Write favorite feel-good songs on scraps of paper and tuck them in a jar. As needed, take one out and have a dance party to that song. 
- During this time, begin and/or finish each day with some family yoga/stretching and some simple verbal affirmations. 
- Host a family Olympics with made-up sports. Pass out homemade medals. 
- Invite a friend to read a new book with you. 
- Rearrange the furniture in one of your rooms to create a new look. 
- Go for a moon walk and talk to a higher power while you're walking. 
- Make a donation to a food bank or another organization helping people during this time. 
- Have a tea party with the rule that everyone must attempt to talk in a designated accent. 
- Watch a YouTube make-up tutorial and practice a new look. 
- Hide things around the house and invite everyone to an indoor scavenger hunt. 
- Make a list of your favorite movies of all time. Share with friends and ask for their list. 

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