

Managing COVID-19 Stress, Anxiety and Depression

News and information about the spread of COVID-19 around the world is coming at us quickly. It can be hard to keep up and if you are keeping up on the latest, it can be even harder to remain calm given all that is going on. Stress, anxiety, and depression are not unusual for people of all ages. But there are things we can do as individuals and collectively to deal with stress and support one another during these challenging times.

1 Know the facts.

Using reliable sources of information will ensure that what you do learn is fact, not fear-based.

- [The BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [HealthLinkBC](#)
- [Health Canada](#)
- [The World Health Organization](#)

2 Reach out.

Social distancing is important and will help control the spread of the virus. At the same time, it can also create even greater feelings of isolation, loneliness, and sometimes depression. Use this time to connect in other ways...call those who are alone, connect with friends online, and offer support to those who really need it. Offer a virtual hug over FaceTime or Skype.

3 Have calm conversations.

Maintaining a sense of calm, especially when [talking to children](#), will go a long way toward easing their fears and uncertainty. Provide age-appropriate, factual information and give them the opportunity ask questions and share how they are feeling.

4 Practice self-care.

Build self-care into your day, even (and especially) as activities change and routines are disrupted. All the things you do to take care of yourself will help manage your stress. And by taking good care of yourself, you'll be better prepared to take care of others. Some self-care ideas:

- Meditate
- Practice deep breathing
- Read about something other than the virus
- Start a digital detox (leave your phone alone for a while)
- Play a board game
- Take a bath
- Cuddle your pet
- Exercise

5 Seek help.

You know your body and its signs of stress. If you are having trouble managing your mental health, contact your healthcare provider and encourage those you love to do the same.

Call 1-888-COVID-19 or text 604-630-0300 for details, advice, and further information on the virus in British Columbia.

If you need help, there are many resources available:

HealthLink BC: Provides 24/7, confidential health information and advice. Call 8-1-1 or visit: www.healthlinkbc.ca.

Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre: Provides confidential, non-judgmental, free emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including thoughts of suicide. Call 604 872-3311 (Greater Vancouver), or toll-free 1 800 SUICIDE (784-2433), or visit: www.crisiscentre.bc.ca.

The KUU-US Crisis Response Service: Provides 24/7 culturally-aware crisis support to Indigenous people in B.C. Call 1-800-588-8717 or visit: www.kuu-uscrisisline.ca.

Mental Health Digital Hub: A provincial website that provides information, services and education and awareness about mental health and substance use for adults, youth and children. www.gov.bc.ca/mentalhealth

Bounce Back: A free evidence-based program designed to help youth and adults experiencing symptoms of mild to moderate depression, low mood or stress, with or without anxiety. Bounce Back® teaches effective skills to help people improve their mental health. Call toll-free: 1 866 639-0522 or visit: www.bouncebackbc.ca.

MindHealthBC: Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Providence Health Care and community partners have created an online mental health counselling program. If you're struggling with depression, anxiety, or other mental health or substance use challenges, please visit the website for information and recommendations for further support in Vancouver, Richmond and other coastal communities. www.mindhealthbc.ca

Heretohelp: Provides information about managing mental illness and maintaining good mental health, including self-management resources and screening self-tests for wellness, mood, anxiety and risky drinking. www.heretohelp.bc.ca