

CORONAVIRUS: JUST THE FACTS | MENTAL HEALTH

Manage Anxiety and Stress

The outbreak of COVID-19 may be stressful for people and communities to handle, especially as new information continues to be released at seemingly breakneck speeds. This stress can be difficult for people to handle.

Maybe you have an older adult in your life with pre-existing medical conditions that could make them more at risk to catch coronavirus. Maybe your workplace recently shut down due to bans on public crowds and you're worried about where your next paycheck is coming from.

We all handle stress differently, and there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to overcoming these emotionally challenging times. Fortunately, there are plenty of beset practices you can follow to make illness-induced stress easier to manage.

WHO IS STRESSED?

There are certain segments of the population who may be more susceptible to stress than others.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, here are some examples of our country's most vulnerable pop-



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ulations:

- People who have preexisting mental health conditions including problems with substance use.
- Children.
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders.

WHAT REACTIONS MIGHT THEY HAVE?

According to SAMHSA,

there are a wide range of emotions that come with dealing with stress. They include:

- Fear and worry about your own health status and that of your loved ones who may have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.

- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

HOW TO HANDLE STRESS

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment plans during an emergency and monitor for any new symptoms.

SAMHSA recommends connecting with family, friends and others in your community to overcome stress.

Other actions to take

include avoiding excessive exposure to media coverage of COVID-19 and taking good care of both your body and mind. This can include regular exercise and meditation, as well as eating healthy, getting plenty of sleep and avoiding alcohol and drugs.

If you think you may be dealing with some form of depression, reach out to your doctor immediately for a consultation and potential treatment.