

COVID-19: The New Normal



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It is not your imagination. COVID-19 is scary and it can create strong feelings of fear and loneliness. The World Health Organization (WHO) says, “It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.” Northcare, along with myStrength and your local Community Mental Health Agency, has tools to help you during this difficult time.

Everyone needs to practice “Home Isolation” as required by Michigan’s “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order. This order is in place until May 15, 2020, but check the news to see if this order has been extended.

Here are tips from myStrength for handling the stress and isolation caused by COVID-19. These tips can help you worry less and think in stronger, more resilient ways.

Try doing the following:

- Do activities that are healthy for your body and mind, like walking (or any exercise), journaling, or meditating (myStrength has many modules on relaxation and meditation).
- Practice healthy eating and sleeping habits. Try to stick to a regular bedtime.
- Continue performing COVID-19 home safety habits like hand washing and disinfecting high contact surfaces.
- Go out as little as possible and wear a mask when you shop for food, while keeping a 6 feet distance from others.
- Maintain daily hygiene like showering and dressing to keep a routine. Structure can be reassuring in times of uncertainty.
- Create new routines to replace old habits.
- Keep in touch with your friends, family, and health providers. Your mental health is as important as your physical health.
- Get factual information. Listen to health experts like the CDC, the WHO, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and get new facts on COVID-19.

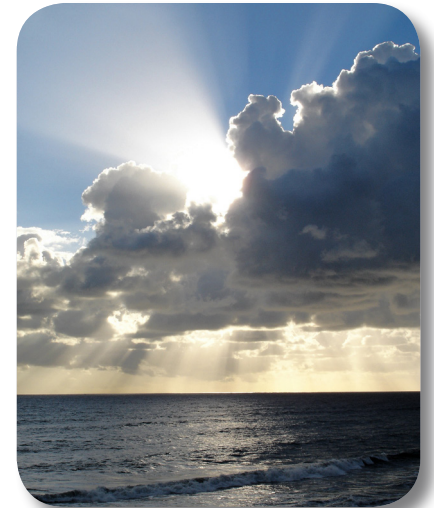




- Don't overload yourself with too much information. Take breaks from the news and distract yourself with something you enjoy.
- Use this time in isolation to develop and practice new goals. Create both short- and long-term plans such as sorting through your closet or learning a new skill.
- If you need additional help, contact your local Community Mental Health Agency. Each county continues to offer mental health services like therapy and case management via telehealth - over the phone or video conferencing.

While no one can eliminate your anxiety, you can learn to better manage your worries by:

- Remembering that “social distancing” is necessary “physical” distancing for critical health reasons. It is a health precaution, meant to protect you and everyone in your community.
- Understanding that forced isolation is difficult. Keep track of your feelings. Even though we live in a connected world, many of us will feel lonelier than ever. If you are feeling lonely these days, you are not alone. Have positive—but realistic—expectations.
- Learning to tolerate your loneliness and function as well as you can. Over time your anxiety will decrease as you adapt and adjust. By not avoiding your fears, you can help reduce those fears over time.



REMEMBER: The best way to prevent COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed. Stay Home, Stay Safe.



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Check out the CDC website. It has a special tab devoted to coronavirus developments and information.

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