

Considering Faith, Community, and Mental Health During the COVID-19 Crisis

According to a recent [survey](#) released by the American Psychiatric Associationⁱ, many people have significant anxiety and concerns related to coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

- Nearly half of Americans (**48%**) are anxious about the possibility of getting coronavirus.
- Nearly four in ten Americans (**40%**) are anxious about becoming seriously ill or dying from coronavirus.
- Far more Americans (**62%**) are anxious about the possibility of family and loved ones getting coronavirus.

One in four people who seek help for mental health concerns turn to faith leaders before they seek help from clinical professionalsⁱⁱ.

This document is written with faith- and community-based leaders in mind, as they serve people experiencing fear and anxiety associated with COVID-19.

The following are resources that address these fears and the mental health concerns that may be associated with COVID-19. The resources recommended herein are a compilation gathered through Partnership Center research and received from stakeholders. The resource list is not intended to be exhaustive, and we welcome other resource recommendations be sent to Partnerships@hhs.gov.

URGENT NOTE:

If you or someone you care about feels overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others, call 911 or emergency professionals.

You can also contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK helpline or refer people to the Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990, both are available 24/7/365. You can also reach out to the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746. This is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster.

General Information About Stress And Coping

- The outbreak of COVID-19 may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.
- Prolonged stress may exacerbate already existing or underlying psychological disorders. It also may trigger stress reactions like panic, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, families not accustomed to spending so much time in close quarters may see relationships strained.
- It is important to remember parents and caregivers.
 - Parents juggling the requirements of work with the challenge of homeschooling their children may need your support.
 - Community faith leaders often serve as their community’s caregivers and should be remembered and served as they serve their community.

Federal Resources

Be sure to get the latest information from the [Centers for Disease Control’s \(CDC\) COVID-19 website](#). The CDC also has guidance for [addressing stress and anxiety](#) related to COVID19 and specific guidance for [faith and community leaders](#).

SAMHSA has [guidance and resources](#) to assist individuals, providers, communities, and states across the country. [Taking care of your Behavioral Health](#) is a helpful resource to consider the mental health impacts of social distancing and how to address them. SAMHSA’s **Mental Health Technology Transfer Centers** are also providing [online training and technical assistance](#) related to COVID-19. SAMHSA’s **Serious Mental Illness Advisor** (SMI Advisor) has a [page](#) with additional information. SAMHSA also has a helpful resource for [talking with children](#), which includes tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers during infectious disease outbreaks like COVID-19.

The **Administration for Community Living** (ACL) supports the ARCH Respite community, which includes resources on [caregivers and COVID-19](#).

Telehealth services have been [expanded](#) as a result of COVID19 and may be applicable to specific circumstances, including expansions for [Medicare beneficiaries](#). A [helpful FAQ](#) has been developed to answer questions for clients and clinicians alike.

Tools and Resources

All Mental Health launched a [FREE web app](https://coronavirus.allmentalhealth.org) available at <https://coronavirus.allmentalhealth.org> to help offer support during these difficult times.

The handout, [Managing Stress Resource](#), includes tips for coping with the stress of COVID-19.

Many have also acknowledged strategies and exercises that promote mindfulness as an effective way people of faith, as well as individuals of no faith identification, can address stress and anxiety related to COVID-19:

- *Psychology Today*: [Coping with the Coronavirus with Mindfulness and Compassion](#)
- Child Mind Institute: [How Mindfulness Can Help During COVID-19](#)
- Johns Hopkins Medicine: [Stressed About COVID-19? Here's What Can Help](#)

Note there are a number of free apps for smartphones that provide mindfulness exercises. Many of these apps are free to most users.

National Advocacy Resources (Listed In Alphabetical Order)

A number of national advocacy organizations have developed resources for addressing mental health and the coronavirus:

- [Mental Health Alliance \(MHA\)](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid \(MHFA\)](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)
- [National Council for Behavioral Health \(NCBH\)](#)

Mental Health Professional Organizations (Listed In Alphabetical Order)

A number of Mental Health Professional Organizations have developed resources for addressing mental health and the coronavirus.

- [American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy](#)
- [American Psychiatric Association](#)
- [American Psychological Association](#)
- [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\)](#)

Organizations below are listed by faith traditions in alphabetical order. The groups are a sample of organizations faith and community leaders can work with to address individuals with mental illness and caregivers in their community. **The links are provided as an informational resource only** and do not necessarily represent the official position or views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Christian

American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC) has a [resource page](#) related to COVID-19.

[The Beyond Disaster program](#) from the **Trauma Healing Institute** provides materials to help people recover from natural and man-made disasters and may be helpful in addressing individuals whose mental health may be affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The program integrates best practices in mental health into a biblical framework and is offered in English and Spanish. Download FREE PDF copies or order printed copies from <https://disasterrelief.bible>. Beyond Disaster is distributed **by American Bible Society** in the USA and by other partners worldwide.

Reboot Alliance developed their [REBOOT Recovery Crisis Edition](#) based on their work helping people overcome trauma together for nearly a decade. Reboot Recovery Crisis Edition is a FREE 5-part web series to help people cope with the current crisis.

The Presbyterian Mental Health Network has posted a [wealth of resources](#) to address the mental health impacts of COVID-19. This includes how to address [Mental Health Well-Being during a Pandemic](#).

Key Ministry is collecting a number of resources to [address coronavirus](#).

Fresh Hope is hosting [Mental Health Monday's online](#) and promoting a resource to [address anxiety related to coronavirus](#).

Hindu

Hindu American Foundation notes how [Hindu spiritual practices](#) can help manage COVID-19 anxiety.

Humanism

The Association of Humanistic Psychology provides some [helpful suggestions](#) for how to deal with anxiety and depression related to the Coronavirus from a humanistic perspective.

Jewish

The **Blue Dove Foundation** has developed a number of helpful resources for the Jewish community, including [Isolation + HAKAROT HATOV \(Gratitude\)](#) and [Building Your Mental Health Passover Seder Plate](#). They are hosting webinars that encourage acts of self-care like baking challah.

JCFS Chicago has a [helpful article](#) for addressing mental health coping during COVID-19.

Muslim

IMANA, a network for American-Muslim physicians, dentists, and other healthcare professionals in North America, provides [mental health tips for coronavirus](#).

Yaqeen Institute produced a video titled, "[Coronavirus: Spirituality, Anxiety, Practicality](#)." Another helpful video is from Naseeha Mental Health called, "[Coping with Anxiety during COVID-19](#)."

The **American Psychiatric Association** [provides best practices for working with Muslim populations](#). [Dr. Farha Abassi](#) who leads this effort is available to connect with leaders who are interested in learning more for their community and how it specifically applies to addressing concerns related to COVID19.

ⁱ "New Poll: COVID-19 Impacting Mental Well-Being: Americans Feeling Anxious, Especially for Loved Ones; Older Adults are Less Anxious," American Psychiatric Association, March 25, 2020, <https://www.psychiatry.org/newsroom/news-releases/new-poll-covid-19-impacting-mental-well-being-americans-feeling-anxious-especially-for-loved-ones-older-adults-are-less-anxious>.

ⁱⁱ P.S.Wang, P.A.Berglund, & R.C. Kessler, "Patterns and correlates of contacting clergy for mental disorders in the United States," *Health Services Research*, 38(2), 647-673. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12785566>.