



Star Counseling Services

9700 W State Street. Star. ID. 83669. Phone:208-866-7268 Fax: 208-348-5526

Mental Health Tips During Covid19

Adults and children everywhere are experiencing increased anxiety and depression due to orders to stay in and around their homes during the COVID-19 outbreak. During this time, it's important to recognize the emotions we are experiencing are normal reactions to an abnormal experience.

Our emotions are fluid and have a job in helping us care for ourselves. Emotions require action for processing and relief. Your ability to accurately identify your emotions and feelings will better help you figure out what to do to care for yourself during this time. It might be useful to print off an emotions chart and hang it somewhere in your home, as a reminder to check in periodically to make sure you are meeting your emotional needs. This is also a great way to increase your children's emotional language and create positive dialogue about how you, as an adult, manage your emotions.

When one of our areas of self-care is being neglected, our mental health suffers.

Social Health: *In a time of social distancing, technology is your friend.*

- Social platforms where you can view and speak to others in real-time will help you feel socially connected and cause mini spikes in the release of feel-good chemicals in your body. Try connecting virtually with a video messaging platform or app such as Facebook Messenger, Marco Polo, FaceTime, Skype, Zoom or Google Hangouts. Many online game companies are offering discounts and deals to make connecting with friends and family cheaper such as Jackbox Tv and Party Tracker. Seeing friend's faces and hearing their voices while playing games often leads to more laughter than text forms of communication, promoting an increase in anxiety and depression fighting chemicals.

Physical Health: *An apple and walk a day will keep worries at bay.*

- Eating healthy is difficult when stress levels are high, be flexible with yourself and your diet during this time. If you want to indulge, go ahead, but try to use it as a reward or motivator for getting up, out and moving around. There are lots of 10-20 minute workout programs and apps you can use on your smartphone, smartwatch, Fitbit, or online. Check out programs like Beach Body or Vshred for free trials online.
- Walking to the mailbox is a great way to get fresh air, move your body, and socialize with neighbors from a distance. This is a great time to start writing to family and friends, which will give you a reason to make trips to the mailbox and create positive anticipatory feelings about checking the mail for responses. Any activity requiring repetitive movement of the same muscle group on both sides of the body, for three minutes or longer will release calming chemicals i.e. walking, rocking, swinging, swimming, jogging, biking, just to name a few.
- Increased anxiety can negatively affect sleep. Keep a schedule even if you are working from home or not working. Try to wake up and go to bed at the same time each day. The dropping



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of your body temperature is what triggers sleep, so try raising your body temperature prior to bedtime with a bath or warm drink. Turn off technology at least 30 minutes before bed. It may sound silly, but close your eyes or wear a sleep mask while performing a boring mental routine like naming the states from west coast to east to trigger sleep faster.

- Use your senses to improve your mood. Citrus smells and tastes alert or awaken, warding off depression i.e. pineapple, lemon, lime, mango, and oranges. Smells and flavors such as mint, lavender, jasmine, cinnamon and vanilla are calming scents and help with anxiety.

Creative: *“The work of art is the scream of freedom.”- Christo*

- Art is an extension of our souls. Creating, whether it be drawing, painting, sculpting, writing, or an activity such as coloring, baking, singing, dancing, building, repairing or designing your garden are outlets that lift our spirits. Try painting on rocks, or touching up old items in the house or yard. Use sidewalk chalk to leave messages for friends and neighbors. Experiment by creating new recipes, hair or makeup styles, or room arrangements. Fix things on the to-do list or search YouTube for how to use left-over parts around the house in upcycling projects such as turning old tires into flower boxes. Involve the kids in creative play; pulling out random objects and brainstorming different uses, other than the objects original use.

Spiritual: *“Meditation is like a gym in which you develop the powerful mental muscles of calm and insight.”– Ajahn Brahm*

- Studies have found that people who believe in a higher power or purpose in life live longer, get ill less often, heal faster, have more work success, and experience happier social relationships. Spiritual activities could be organized religion and prayer, time in nature, meditation, yoga, Tai Chi, or other creative outlets which lead to feelings of euphoria or peace. Volunteering and helping others can shift our focus from our own situation, decrease personal anxiety, and create a sense of connectedness and greater purpose.
- Part of emotional and spiritual health is having the ability to block out negative influences. Though technology is great for connecting with others, it’s important not to overindulge in the news or searching Google for symptoms. Set specific time limits for news and try setting a worry time. A worry time is a designated 10-20 minutes where you allow yourself to worry. Sometimes writing your worries out can help to. Giving yourself a designated time and place to worry, can often have a reverse effect and free you from worrying the rest of the day. Try this for a couple of days and you will run out of things to worry about before your worry time is up.



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For additional activity ideas, see the list below, or search Google for further ideas.

1. Soak in the bathtub
2. Collect things (coins, shells, etc.)
3. Use your fine tableware once a week
4. Put flowers on the table and around the house
5. Open windows and doors to let more light in
6. Have music playing all day
7. Go for a walk
8. Shop online
9. Rearrange rooms
10. Lie in the sun
11. Look up jokes or watch funny videos
12. Think about past travels, look at old trip photos
13. Plan a future trip
14. Read a magazine or newspapers
15. Start a new hobby or skill (stamp collecting, model building, wood burning, archery, etc.)
16. Spend an evening online gaming with friends
17. Plan your days activities
18. Cook favorite foods
19. Practice yoga or tai chi
20. Repair items around the house
21. Work on the car or bicycle
22. Look up inspirational quotes
23. Create a Pinterest board of quotes, future vacations, or crafts
24. Allow kids to teach you a game
25. Give/receive foot massage or back rub from family
26. Do volunteer work like take canned food to a food bank
27. Have a quiet evening
28. Learn a new card game
29. Care for houseplants
30. Groom pets



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31. Doodle
32. Put together an outfit that makes you feel good
33. Plan a future party
34. Think about buying items, online window shop
35. Spend time outdoors
36. Go for a drive
37. Sing
38. Dance
39. Arrange flowers
40. Practice religion or spirituality
41. Create weight loss plan
42. Make a list of your skills and good qualities
43. Enjoy intimacy with your partner
44. Paint
45. Write a poem
46. Doing something spontaneously
47. Work on textiles (embroidery, needlepoint, weaving, knitting, etc.)
53. Nap
54. Learn an instrument
55. Play a musical instrument
56. Google and do an art or craft
57. Make a gift for someone
58. Start a virtual book club.
59. Drink coffee/tea
60. Daydream
61. Ride a bike 89.
62. Complete a to-do task
63. Learn a new language
65. Take photos
66. Collage photos
67. Go fishing
68. Play a sport like Tennis
69. Spring clean



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70. Write in a diary or journal
71. Write letters
72. Chalk messages on sidewalk
73. Make and leave gifts for neighbors
74. Paint rocks
75. Read non-fiction
76. Start a new tv series
77. Do a puzzle
78. Solve riddles or crosswords
79. Watch a sunrise or sunset
80. Stargaze
81. Landscape or yard work
82. Organize the garage
83. Give everyone in your family a compliment
84. Talk about what you are thankful for
85. List three gratitudes each day.
86. Share a challenge you learned from
87. Pray or tap into your higher power
88. Use cologne, perfume or aftershave
89. Light candles, Scentsy, or air fresheners in favorite scents
90. People watch
91. Give yourself a manicure or pedicure
92. Give away something you no longer need or use
93. Join a new Facebook group
94. Get involved in a social/political cause
95. Take a shower
96. Repair something broken
97. Make up your own drink
98. Bird watch
99. Tell stories
100. Listen to books on Audible or Podcast