



Allegheny County Department of Human Services Helpful Resources

Mental Health

From the World Health Organization (WHO)

Mental Health Considerations during COVID-19 Outbreak (excerpts)

In January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a new coronavirus disease in Hubei Province, China to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. WHO stated there is a high risk of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) spreading to other countries around the world.

WHO and public health authorities around the world are taking action to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. However, this time of crisis is generating stress in the population. These mental health considerations were developed by the Mental Health Department as support for mental and psychological well-being during COVID-19 outbreak.

General Population

1. COVID-19 has and is likely to affect people from many countries, in many geographical locations. Don't attach it to any ethnicity or nationality. Be empathetic to those who got affected, in and from any country, those with the disease have not done anything wrong.
2. Don't – refer to people with the disease as “COVID-19 cases”, “victims” “COVID-19 families” or the “diseased”. They are “people who have COVID-19”, “people who are being treated for COVID-19”, “people who are recovering from COVID-19” and after recovering from COVID-19 their life will go on with their jobs, families and loved ones.
3. Avoid watching, reading or listening to news that cause you to feel anxious or distressed; seek information mainly to take practical steps to prepare your plans and protect yourself and loved ones. Seek information updates at specific times during the day once or twice. The sudden and near-constant stream of news reports about an outbreak can cause anyone to feel worried. Get the facts. Gather information at regular intervals, from WHO website and local health authorities' platforms, in order to help you distinguish facts from rumors.
4. Protect yourself and be supportive to others. Assisting others in their time of need can benefit the person receiving support as well as the helper.
5. Find opportunities to amplify the voices, positive stories and positive images of local people who have experienced the new coronavirus (COVID-19) and have recovered or who have supported a loved one through recovery and are willing to share their experience.
6. Honor caretakers and healthcare workers supporting people affected with COVID-19 in your community. Acknowledge the role they play to save lives and keep your loved ones safe.

For Caretakers of Children:

1. Help children find positive ways to express disturbing feelings, such as fear and sadness. Every child has his/her own way to express emotions. Sometimes engaging in a creative activity, such as playing, and drawing can facilitate this process. Children feel relieved if they can express and communicate their disturbing feelings in a safe and supportive environment.
2. Keep children close to their parents and family, if considered safe for the child, and avoid separating children and their caregivers as much as possible. If a child needs to be separated from his/her primary caregiver, ensure that appropriate alternative care is and that a social worker, or equivalent, will regularly follow up on the child. Further, ensure that during periods of separation, regular contact with parents and caregivers is maintained, such as twice-daily scheduled phone or video calls or other age-appropriate communication (e.g., social media depending on the age of the child).
3. Maintain familiar routines in daily life as much as possible, especially if children are confined to home. Provide engaging age appropriate activities for children. As much as possible, encourage children to continue to play and socialize with others, even if only within the family when advised to restrict social contact.
4. During times of stress and crisis, it is common for children to seek more attachment and be more demanding on parents. Discuss the COVID-19 with your Children in honest and age-appropriate information. If your children have concerns, addressing those together may ease their anxiety. Children will observe adults' behaviors and emotions for cues on how to manage their own emotions during difficult times.

People in Isolation:

1. Stay connected and maintain your social networks. Even in situations of isolations, try as much as possible to keep your personal daily routines. If health authorities have recommended limiting your physical social contact to contain the outbreak, you can stay connected via e-mail, social media, video conference and telephone.
2. During times of stress, pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in healthy activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy food. Keep things in perspective. Public health agencies and experts in all countries are working on the outbreak to ensure the availability of the best care to those affected.
3. A near-constant stream of news reports about an outbreak can cause anyone to feel anxious or distressed. Seek information updates and practical guidance at specific times during the day from health professionals and WHO website and avoid listening to or following rumors that make you feel uncomfortable.

Stay Informed:

Find the latest information from WHO on where COVID-19 is spreading:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>

Helping children cope with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak



Children may respond to stress in different ways such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawing, angry or agitated, bedwetting etc.

Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra love and attention.

Children need adults' love and attention during difficult times. Give them extra time and attention.

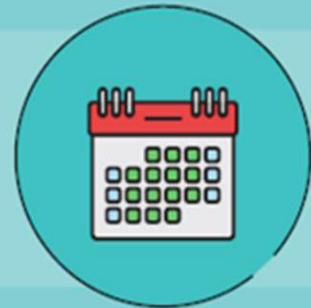
Remember to listen to your children, speak kindly and reassure them.

If possible, make opportunities for the child to play and relax.



Try and keep children close to their parents and family and avoid separating children and their caregivers to the extent possible. If separation occurs (e.g. hospitalization) ensure regular contact (e.g. via phone) and re-assurance.

Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible, or help create new ones in a new environment, including school/learning as well as time for safely playing and relaxing.



Provide facts about what has happened, explain what is going on now and give them clear information about how to reduce their risk of being infected by the disease in words that they can understand depending on their age.

This also includes providing information about what could happen in a re-assuring way (e.g. a family member and/or the child may start not feeling well and may have to go to the hospital for some time so doctors can help them feel better).

Medical

UPMC Health Plan (including UPMC for You aka Medicaid)

Waived all copays AND deductibles for the next 90 days (3/11/20 6/11/20) for UPMC Anywhere Care virtual urgent care visits.

- Wait times are a bit long, but it's a lot easier and safer waiting from home than in an urgent care.
- There is also an app on smartphones called UPMC Anywhere Care clients who have access to smartphones can download. (<https://myupmc.upmc.com/anywhere-care/>)

Cigna

- Waiving all out of pocket expenses for coronavirus testing for its fully insured plan members.
- <https://www.post-gazette.com/business/healthcare-business/2020/03/05/COVID-19-testing-upmc-highmark-coronavirus-quest-diagnostics-labcorp-pittsburgh-insurance/stories/202003050185>

Highmark

- Waiving all out of pocket expenses for coronavirus testing for its fully insured Medicare Advantage, and Affordable Care Act plan members.
- <https://www.post-gazette.com/business/healthcare-business/2020/03/05/COVID-19-testing-upmc-highmark-coronavirus-quest-diagnostics-labcorp-pittsburgh-insurance/>

CVS

- Offering free delivery on prescriptions and essential items
- <https://www.cvs.com/content/delivery>

The Central Outreach Wellness Center began offering a limited number of COVID-19 tests in a drive by setting at the following location:

127 Anderson Street Suite 101
Timber Court Building
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
Phone: (412) 322 4151

Please follow medical guidelines set forth by your doctor and Emergency Rooms when seeking medical attention at this time.