

SAFETY & WELLNESS UPDATE



AUGUST 2020

Coping with Stress During Uncertain Times

When you hear, read and watch the news, you continue to hear about COVID-19 and how it is affecting everyone. You may be feeling anxious or stressed. Having these feelings is normal and may be pronounced among different people depending on what is going on in their life at that time. What is important is to know how it may affect yourself and others, what to do and when to get help.

Know the Signs of Stress

Signs of stress may be evident in a person's behavioral, physical, emotional and even cognitive health. Here are a few examples for you:

- **Behavioral:** Increase in alcohol, tobacco or illegal drug use; worrying excessively; blaming others for everything; inability to feel pleasure or have fun.
- **Physical:** Getting tremors or muscle twitches; having headaches or other pains; having stomachaches or diarrhea.
- **Emotional:** Feeling fearful or anxious; feeling overwhelmed or depressed.
- **Cognitive:** Having trouble thinking clearly or concentrating; having trouble remembering things.

Here are some tips from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to help you keep your stress in check during these changing times:

Keep Things in Perspective

You want to stay up to date as things change, but set limits on how much time you spend watching news and researching about COVID-19. Take the time to break away from the news and focus on the things that are going well in your life and that you can control. Remind yourself each day what you are thankful for.

Get the Facts

Make sure that any information you obtain about COVID-19 is coming from a reliable resource so you are getting the most up-to-date and accurate information.

Keep Yourself Healthy

Eat right, exercise, get enough sleep, avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol, and drink plenty of water. Managing your physical health may help reduce the stress you are feeling.

Find Ways to Relax

Utilize deep breathing and meditation, engage in hobbies you enjoy, pace yourself between stressful activities, do something fun after a difficult task, read, listen to music or talk to someone about your feelings.

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RESOURCES:

WELLNESS ARCHIVE:
[LEXINGTONCENTER.ORG/WELLNESS](https://www.lexingtoncenter.org/wellness)
TELEMEDICINE PROVIDER:
[UNITED CONCIERGE MEDICINE](https://www.unitedconcierge.com)
LEXINGTON MEDICAL PLAN AND CAFÉWELL LIFE POINTS PROGRAM:
[CDPHP](https://www.cdphp.org)

MANAGERS, PLEASE POST THIS INFORMATION AND SHARE IT WITH YOUR STAFF.

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Coping with Stress During Uncertain Times, Cont.

In summary, take the time to recognize when you are feeling stress. Remember that these feelings are natural, but if you continue to show signs of stress for several days or weeks and are not getting relief from coping strategies, seek professional help.

Below is a list of resources to help guide you through some of the coping mechanisms you may find useful in helping reduce your stress and have a positive impact on your behavioral health:

- [Ten Percent Happier – Coronavirus Sanity Guide](#) – meditations, podcasts, blog posts and talks to help build resilience and find some calm.
- [Aware Mindfulness Channel](#) – short audio mindfulness exercises to help you focus, release tension and “reset” for improved wellbeing.
- [Mindfulness Exercises](#)
- [DBSA Wellness Toolbox](#)
- [Wellness Tracker](#)
- [Full Wellness Tracker with Instructions - PDF](#)
- [Wellness Wheel Workbook](#)
- [Wellness Wheel Goal Planner](#)
- [PHQ-9 Depression Scale](#)
- [DBSA Ask the Doc FAQ's](#) – questions answered by mental healthcare providers

If you find coping mechanisms, tools and resources are not helping, speak with your healthcare professional and consider communicating with one of the following organizations:

- [NIH – Help for Mental Illnesses](#)
Contacts for mental health related questions:
1-866-615-6464 (toll-free)
1-301-443-8431 (TTY)
1-866-415-8051 (TTY toll-free)
Available in English and Spanish
Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET
[Live Online Chat](#)
Email Us: nimhinfo@nih.gov
- [NAMI HelpLine](#) – 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or info@nami.org
- [Employee Assistance Program](#)—1-800-252-4555 or log on at <https://www.theeap.com/>.

Contact Michelle Peryea, RN, Lexington’s Safety and Wellness Coordinator, at (518) 775-5420 and schedule at FREE Health Support Visit today!

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Heat-related Illness Prevention

When the body is unable to cool off by sweating, heat-induced illnesses such as heat rash, cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke can occur. These illnesses can be serious, sometimes even resulting in death.

Factors Leading to Heat Stress

- ⇒ High temperature and humidity
- ⇒ Direct sun or heat
- ⇒ Limited air movement
- ⇒ Physical exertion
- ⇒ Poor physical condition
- ⇒ Some medications
- ⇒ A lack of tolerance for hot workplaces or areas

Heat Stress Prevention

- ⇒ Know the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses, and monitor yourself and your co-workers.
- ⇒ Block or avoid direct sunlight or other heat sources.
- ⇒ Use cooling fans or air conditioning.
- ⇒ Take regular breaks in shaded areas.
- ⇒ Drink plenty of water or high-electrolyte fluids.
- ⇒ Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing.
- ⇒ Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks and heavy meals.
- ⇒ If you detect signs of heat exhaustion, notify a supervisor or appropriate individual with first aid training.

Heat Rash

Symptoms: Cluster of small red pimples or blisters

Causes: Excessive sweating, which leads to clogged pores and, if untreated, to infection

First aid: Cleanse and dry the affected area and use calamine lotion or powder to increase comfort.

Heat Cramps

Symptoms: Painful spasms of leg, arm or abdominal muscles, heavy sweating and thirst

Causes: Electrolyte deficiencies during or after strenuous physical activity, due to extended periods of intense sweating

First aid: The individual must stop all activity, sit in a cool place, drink plenty of water or high-electrolyte fluids and wait for a few hours after the cramps have subsided before engaging in strenuous physical activity.

Heat-related Illness Prevention, Cont.

Heat Exhaustion

Symptoms: Fatigue, profuse sweating, weak and rapid heartbeat, headaches, nausea, confusion, loss of coordination, muscle weakness, dizziness or fainting

Causes: Dehydration, lack of acclimatization to high temperatures, strain on the circulatory system and reduced blood flow to the brain

First aid: The affected individual must rest in a cool, shaded or air-conditioned area. First aid includes cooling the affected individual by fanning, misting with water or applying ice packs. Give cool (not cold) water only if the individual is conscious.

Heat Stroke

Symptoms: Core body temperature exceeding 104° F, hot skin with a lack of perspiration, strong and rapid pulse, nausea, confusion, dizziness, seizures or convulsions, or fainting

Causes: Heat exhaustion was left untreated and the body's cooling mechanisms have been exhausted

First aid: Heat stroke is immediately life-threatening. Notify a supervisor and follow the emergency action procedure. While waiting for medical personnel to arrive, the individual giving care should take the following measures:

- ⇒ Move the affected person to a cool, shaded or air-conditioned area.
- ⇒ Give cool (not cold) water only if the individual is conscious.
- ⇒ Cool the individual by fanning, misting with water or applying ice packs.
- ⇒ If necessary, loosen or remove heavy clothing.

Remember that most heat-related illnesses can be prevented by taking appropriate precautions.

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT LEXINGTON SAFETY AND WELLNESS? PLEASE

CONTACT:

Michelle Peryea
Safety and Wellness Coordinator
127 E. State Street, Gloversville
peryeam@thearclexington.org
(518) 775-5420