

Coping with COVID-19

boost
your
mood

For more tips and resources for individuals, children, young adults, families, and communities, visit DBHIDS.ORG/BOOST

City of Philadelphia
 **DBHIDS**
DEPARTMENT of BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
and INTELLECTUAL disABILITY SERVICES

#HealthyMindsPhilly
#mindPHL



Photo: Steve Weinik

How to take care of your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak

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As we approach the anniversary of the onset of COVID-19 worldwide, people all over the world are experiencing a variety of emotions. As a result of COVID-19, most people have experienced isolation, stress, anxiety, and confusion at some point. Many have lost loved ones. Many others have lost their usual source of income.

Reading and hearing about the number of deaths from COVID-19 is distressing. Family and other relationships have been particularly stressed by isolation and distancing protocols put in place to limit the spread of COVID-19. Amidst all this, there has been an increase in alcohol and/or drug use to cope. Even with the approach of spring and the availability of vaccines, anxiety and stress levels remain high for many.

Those with pre-existing anxiety and other mental health conditions may be particularly at risk. Individuals and teams whose work brings them in contact with infected persons have experienced stress and anxiety about possibly contracting COVID-19 and/or spreading it to their loved ones. Other groups at risk for increased stress include the elderly, those caring for sick or vulnerable persons, and those experiencing significant changes to work, travel, or family life. For some groups, such as working parents of young children, youths, teachers, caregivers and first responders, the pandemic has been particularly challenging.

Regardless of status or work function, we can anticipate that all of us have already experienced (or will, at some point) some increased stress.

At times like this, it is important to continue to take steps to promote mental wellness and [resilience](#).

DBHIDS aligns with [SAMHSA](#), [Mental Health America](#), the [Centers for Disease Control](#), [American Psychological Association](#), and the [American Psychiatric Association](#) to make the following recommendations:

1. **Connect with people:** Reaching out to people you trust is one of the best ways to reduce anxiety, depression, loneliness, and boredom during social distancing, quarantine, and isolation. Make phone calls frequently, use software such as Zoom, Google Meet, FaceTime, and text messaging to stay connected.
2. **Relax:** Calm your body often by doing things that work for you—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate, pray, or engage in home-based exercise including yoga. Pace yourself between stressful activities and do something fun after a hard task.

At times like this, it is important to continue to take steps to promote mental wellness and resilience.

For more tips and resources for individuals, children, youth, families, and communities, visit [DBHIDS.org/Boost](https://www.dbhids.org/Boost)

3. **Get outside in nature—if feasible:** Parks are a safer option than indoor meeting spaces when looking for recreation. We encourage you to use the City's Parks and Recreation resources in ways that are safe and that comply with current City guidelines. Being outdoors in spaces such as FDR Park, Fairmount Park, and the Wissahickon Valley Park, or just a walk to your local park, can help boost your mood. Just remember to wear a mask, practice social distancing and wash or sanitize your hands frequently.
4. **Do not ignore your health; talk to your doctor:** Continue to schedule remote tele-health appointments for mental health, substance use, or physical health needs.
5. **Stay informed using credible sources:** This helps us stay grounded and centered with accurate and timely information. For Philadelphians, we recommend visiting the [City of Philadelphia's](#) COVID-19 webpage. You can also text COVID-19PHL to 888-777 to receive updates to your phone. The City has also set up a 24-hour helpline (1-800-722-7112) if you need to speak with a healthcare professional.
6. **Consider limiting media exposure:** While it is important to stay informed, constant monitoring of news and social media can trigger anxiety and stress, so it is equally as important to create a healthy balance to minimize overexposure.
7. **Make time for yourself:** For parents of young children who may have to balance work with homeschooling, try to plan scheduled "me time" when you can unplug and do something you enjoy and find relaxing - just for you. The same recommendations apply for caregivers.
8. **More tips for children and young adults:** Check out these tips on schooling during COVID-19 for [students](#) and college-age youths from [Mental Health America](#).

In addition to these tips, we encourage you to visit [HealthyMindsPhilly.org](#) where you can find [COVID-19 Mental Health Awareness & Resources](#). This is a free website powered by DBHIDS that provides [behavioral health resources](#) and a free, quick and anonymous [mental health check-up](#) to gauge your emotional well-being.

We also encourage people to take care of one another and check in with those around us who might be facing challenges during this uncertain time, so together we can stay well. Remember, you are not alone



Behavioral Health Screenings

Understanding your behavioral health is a key part of maintaining your overall health.

Identifying signs and symptoms of behavioral health challenges, such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and other addictions, is an important first step.

Behavioral health screenings are quick, free, and anonymous and are available 24/7. Think of them as check-ups from the neck up!

After taking a screening, you will learn whether you or someone you care about might be experiencing symptoms of a behavioral health disorder. The screening tool is *not intended* to diagnose for any particular disorder. Instead, it will help you learn more about what kind of follow-up might be appropriate and will offer a variety of resources and referral information.

Screenings are available for:

Substance Use Disorders

Bipolar Disorder

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Depression

Alcohol Misuse

Eating Disorders

Adolescent Depression*

**Adults take on behalf of a child they are concerned about*

*Take a
Screening*

visit healthymindsphilly.org/screening

For more information contact:

HealthyMindsPhilly@phila.gov

215-685-3755

**“We felt
it was a great
way to engage the
community.”**

- Screening
Partner



Exámenes de salud mental

Entender su salud mental es clave para mantener su estado de salud general. Identificar signos y síntomas de problemas mentales como la depresión, la ansiedad, el abuso de sustancias, y otras adicciones, es un importante primer paso.

Los exámenes de salud mental son rápidos, gratuitos y anónimos, y se pueden practicar las 24 horas los 7 días de la semana. ¡Piense que se va a “evaluar del cuello hacia arriba”!

Después de un examen, sabrá si usted o alguien que esté bajo su cuidado, podría estar teniendo síntomas de un trastorno mental. La herramienta de análisis *no busca* diagnosticar un trastorno en particular. En cambio, sirve para que aprendamos cuál sería el seguimiento apropiado, y nos ofrece una gama de recursos y de información de referencia.

Hágase el examen

Los exámenes pueden hacerse para:

- Trastornos por uso de sustancias
- Trastorno bipolar
- Trastorno de ansiedad generalizada
- Trastorno de estrés postraumático
- Depresión
- Uso indebido del alcohol
- Trastornos de alimentación
- Depresión en adolescentes*

**Los adultos representan al menor por el cual consultan.*

Visite healthymindsphilly.org/screening

Para obtener más información:

visite HealthyMindsPhilly@phila.gov

llame al 215-685-3755

"Nos pareció una forma excelente de hacer participar a la comunidad".

- Socio para la práctica de exámenes

Faith and Spiritual Affairs Advisory Board Vaccination Statement

The year 2020 was one of the most challenging years in U.S. history, and 2021 has presented us challenges as well. The confluence of the economic recession, racial injustice, political unrest, and the COVID-19 pandemic has left many of us off balance and uncertain: however, Philadelphians have always been a community of hope and resilience. In addition to our existing tools such as wearing face coverings, practicing proper hand hygiene, and social distancing, the development of vaccines has now provided us with another tool in our toolbox to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Through an emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), we can now receive vaccines that have been studied and proven to have high efficacy. Scientist and public health officials assure us that these vaccines are safe and remarkably effective.

While this is positive news, there are some communities that have not automatically embraced the announcement of a mass inoculation program. Past racially biased and at times dangerous health policies and clinical experiments have targeted particularly vulnerable Black and Brown communities. Additionally, economic, and cultural inequities in the U.S. healthcare system that disproportionately harm Black and Brown communities are real reasons why people are skeptical and unsure about new vaccines.

Despite these disturbing realities, the faith leaders of the DBHIDS Faith and Spiritual Affairs Advisory Board recommend considering the vaccine as another viable option to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. This virus continues to impact our city, and communities of color continue to bear its disproportionate impact.

We encourage you to seek counsel from a trusted medical expert if you have questions or concerns and become familiar with the [City's phased approach to vaccine distribution](#). If you feel this choice is right for you please [register](#) to be notified when you are eligible to receive the vaccine. You can also visit the Philadelphia Department of Public Health website to view [frequently asked questions](#) and answers.

As you discern, continue to slow the spread of COVID-19 by wearing a face covering, maintaining social distance, and practicing proper hand-washing hygiene. As you care for yourself, you care for our city.

Sincerely,
The [Faith and Spiritual Affairs](#) Advisory Board of DBHIDS

“At first, I was nervous, because of the unknown and my needed to take it due to my other health issues. I have strong faith in God and as I prayed, I heard the message that the vaccine would be to my advantage.

I found out that the first to receive the vaccine were the doctors and nurses giving the vaccine. That encouraged me to consult with my doctor who explained that it is safe and encouraged me to get the vaccine”

Arthur Robinson, House Manager

Transformation to Recovery Hope House
South Philly