



### MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

**In our lifetimes, most of us will experience financial issues, health concerns, anxiety, and stress.**

When stress and anxiety become overwhelming, they can impact relationships, work, school, and daily activities. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to manage your emotions and feel more in control.

#### Healthy ways to cope with stress

- **Prioritize feeling good.** Eat healthy, well-balanced meals. Exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid overuse of substances like alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- **Connect with others.** Sharing your ups and downs and hearing about what loved ones are doing can help you feel more connected.
- **Find activities you enjoy.** Learn a new skill, catch up on your reading, or start that project you have been wanting to take on.
- **Maintain a sense of hope.** Engage in spiritual self-care. Take deep breaths and stretch or meditate. Journal about the things for which you are thankful.

#### How to support your family

- Spend time together as a family. Play board games or cards, share favorite TV shows, or cook and eat meals together. You'll strengthen family bonds when you work and play together. If you're not all together, schedule calls to check in.
- Encourage family members to plan self-care routines for themselves.
- Let your family members know how they can help you—and ask what you can do for them.

### When to get help

When anxiety and stress become overwhelming, you may need help. People with pre-existing mental health conditions or substance use disorders may be particularly vulnerable. Here are common signs of distress, according to the CDC:

- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

If you experience these symptoms several days in a row and they impact your ability to carry out your normal responsibilities, call your health care provider or seek help from a trained counselor.

### Additional resources and numbers to call

- Call LifeSolutions for confidential counseling and support at **1-833-210-1489 (TTY:711)** or email [lifesolutions@upmc.edu](mailto:lifesolutions@upmc.edu).
- Call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990. You can also text "TalkWithUs" to 66746 (TTY: 1-800-846-8517).

#### SOURCES

Emergency preparedness and response: Taking care of your mental health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Updated September 13, 2019. Accessed Dec. 8, 2020. [emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare.asp](https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare.asp)

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