

IT IS OK

TO BE NOT OK

● ● ● **A Handbook to Help You
Cope During the Pandemic**



**Activities and resources for
mental and emotional well-being,
disaster-related distress, anxiety,
depression, self-care, and coping.**



Special Thanks

Thank you to Brave of Heart Fund and Mental Health America. Mental Health America in Montgomery is supporting frontline healthcare workers and their families with mental and emotional coping during the pandemic. Find more resources at mha-montgomery.org.

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Statistics in this document sourced from Mental Health America, National Institute of Mental Health, National Alliance on Mental Illness, mantherapy.org, and us.movember.com.

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Impact of the Pandemic

Sadness, fear, worry, and other emotions can affect us during or after tough situations. Examples of tough situations include the COVID-19 pandemic, loss of a family member or friend, or experiences related to racism. Dealing with these issues can weigh heavily on your mental health and affect your daily life.

Quick Facts–Did You Know?

- One in five American adults has a mental health condition.
- 21 million Americans have depression.
- Anxiety is the most common mental health disorder in the U.S. It affects 40 million people.
- Suicide accounts for 41,000 deaths annually in the U.S. It is the 10th leading cause of death.
- The rate of mental health disorders doubles for those who have been to war or lived through a disaster, including the pandemic.

Many people are experiencing grief during the pandemic. Grief is a normal response to loss. Grief can happen in response to loss of life, as well as to drastic changes in daily routines and ways of life that usually bring us comfort.

If you are feeling stress, grief, or anxiety during this time, you are not alone.

It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during challenging times. However, feeling strong emotions or being stressed for extended periods of time can have negative effects on your health.

Learning to cope in a healthy way will help you, the people you care about, and those around you become more resilient. You can help yourself, others, and your community by sharing the information in this handbook.

Remember, it is OK to be not OK. There are resources available to help. **You are not alone.**



Quick Self-Check: Do You Need Help?

Do you have mild symptoms that have lasted for **LESS THAN two weeks**?

- Feeling a little sad or down
- Feeling down but still able to work, take care of yourself, and family
- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling irritable and moody



If so, these are some self-care activities that can help:

- Exercising
- Engaging socially with others
- Sleeping on a regular schedule
- Eating healthy
- Sharing with a trusted friend or family member
- Practicing meditation, relaxation, and mindfulness

If these symptoms do not improve or seem to be worse after two weeks of self-care activities, then you may need to talk to your health care provider.

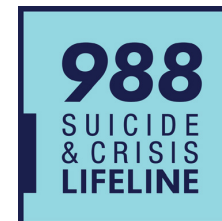
Do you have severe symptoms lasting **MORE THAN two weeks and that are interfering with daily life**?

- Not sleeping
- Appetite changes resulting in unwanted loss of weight or weight gain
- Struggling to get out of bed in the mornings because of mood
- Not able to concentrate or make decisions
- Loss of interest in things you normally enjoy
- Unable to perform daily functions and activities
- Thoughts of death or self-harm

Contact your doctor or a mental health professional if these are problems you are facing. You can also find resources below and throughout this handbook.

Need Support Now?

If you or someone you know is struggling or in a crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org.



LET'S TALK ABOUT

Mental and Emotional Well-Being



It is time to talk about this pandemic and how it has created stress and distress for you, your family, and your co-workers. Mental and emotional health is just as important as physical health. Good mental and emotional health increase happiness and resilience.

Understanding Mental Health

Your mental health is how you feel in your heart and mind. It is always changing. One day you might be happy and another day you might be sad.

Most of us experience mental health challenges. It is normal. Sometimes, they are more severe and can affect emotions and how you think and act.

It is important to know when you need help to maintain good mental and emotional health. It is OK to be not OK. It is also OK to ask for help and to offer help to others who are having mental and emotional health challenges.

Mental Well-Being vs. Mental Illness

Mental Well-Being

Mental well-being refers to the ability of an individual to cope with normal stresses of life. This includes being able to work productively and contribute to the community.

Mental well-being is an essential part of overall health. It is as important as a healthy diet, sleep, and exercise. Making your mental health a priority is not a sign of weakness, but an act of strength.

Mental Illness

Mental illness refers to diagnosable mental disorders that are determined by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.

A mental illness is a condition that can affect your mood, thoughts, emotions, and behavior. It becomes an illness when it is severe or continues for a longer period, and is diagnosed by a trained professional. Common examples of mental illness experienced during COVID are depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance use disorder.

Mental illness is real and treatable.

ACTIVITY: Identify Your Symptoms

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives. We are adapting to a new normal. You are not alone if you are tired, overwhelmed, and stressed. It is time to talk about this pandemic and how it has created stress and distress for you, your family, and your co-workers.

Instructions: Below are some signs and symptoms that COVID-19 may have stressed you during this pandemic. Put a check mark next to each symptom you have felt, or that you are feeling now.

Felt During the Pandemic	Feeling Now	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feeling on edge
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not wanting to make decisions
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty sleeping
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of satisfaction or enjoyment with work
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feeling disconnected from co-workers, customers, or patients
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anger and irritability
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not feeling sympathy or empathy
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased use of alcohol or drugs

Experiencing life-threatening or traumatic events impacts everyone differently. It is important to know about stress-related symptoms that can cause problems with your mental well-being, compassion fatigue, and burnout from your job.

ACTIVITY: Disaster-Related Distress

Instructions: Check the box of any symptoms you have had or are still experiencing since COVID-19 began.

Felt During the Pandemic	Feeling Now	Physical Signs and Symptoms of Disaster-Related Distress
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stomach aches or diarrhea
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Changes in eating habits
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Headaches or other pains with no clear cause
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jumpiness or edginess
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, sleeping too much, or trouble sleeping

Felt During the Pandemic	Feeling Now	Cognitive Signs and Symptoms of Disaster-Related Distress
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty remembering things
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty thinking clearly or concentrating
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Confusion
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trouble making decisions

Felt During the Pandemic	Feeling Now	Emotional Signs and Symptoms of Disaster-related Distress
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anxiety and fear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overwhelming sadness
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anger
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guilt
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Numbness and inability to feel joy or sadness

Felt During the Pandemic	Feeling Now	Behavioral Signs and Symptoms of Disaster-related Distress
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Increase or decrease in activity levels and reduced stamina
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Frequent crying
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of alcohol or drugs to escape feelings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Angry outbursts
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Desire to be alone most of the time and self-isolation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk-taking behavior

Focus On Your Breathing

Focus on your breath as it moves in and out of your body.



STRESS & ANXIETY

Identifying and Handling Stress and Anxiety

Life is stressful. However, we must learn to cope. Not managing stress or anxiety can result in more serious mental health issues.

The Differences Between Stress and Anxiety

Stress:

- Is a feeling of emotional or physical tension
- Is a response to an external cause, such as having an argument or having your car break down
- Can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous
- Goes away once the situation is resolved
- Can be positive, like when it helps you meet a deadline or avoid danger
- Can be negative, like when it interferes with sleep

Anxiety:

- Is usually a reaction to stress
- Involves a persistent feeling of uneasiness and dread that does not go away
- Is consistent even when there is no real threat
- Can interfere with how you live your life, like causing you to avoid things and people you enjoy
- May cause negative physical symptoms

Both stress and anxiety can affect mental and physical well-being. You may experience symptoms such as:

- Excessive worry
- Body pain
- Forgetfulness
- High blood pressure
- Tension
- Loss of sleep
- Headache

Recognize what causes your stress. Common stressors are:

- Money or job issues
- Marriage or divorce
- Health or illness
- Birth of a child
- A sick family member or a sick friend
- Moving

Reduce Brain Chatter

Try to block out the voices in your head that are causing you distress.



Boosting Well-Being to Cope with Stress and Anxiety

Doing small things every day can help you cope and have a positive impact on your mental and emotional well-being. Here are some ways to practice self-care:

Stick to a Routine

Have regular sleep and wake-up times to make sure you get enough rest. Routines lead to other healthy habits.

Take a Walk

It lifts your mood, clears your head, and boosts the blood flow to your brain and body.

Keep a Journal

Write down your feelings to understand them better. A journal is a way to express your fears and vent frustrations. Putting emotions on paper can help you identify and work through your problems.

Eat Healthy Foods

Fruits, vegetables, and “brain foods” like nuts, oily fish, and beans are all healthy. They can also help you stay mentally fit. Energy drinks, sugary foods, sodas, and alcohol can make you feel more anxious or irritable.

Switch off Your Phone

You do not have to make yourself available to everyone every minute of the day. Unplug when you feel like you need to recharge.

Spend Time Outside

Spending time outside can help reduce stress. Caring for pets, walking in the park, and gardening are all good stress relievers.

Listen to Music

Listening to music can lift your mood or provide a sense of calm, based on the type of music you enjoy.

Spend Time with Friends

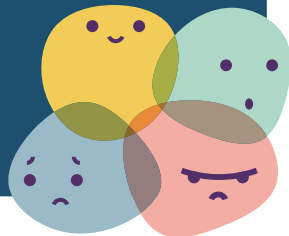
Friendships provide support and make us feel loved and appreciated. Even a quick phone call to a friend can make you feel better.

Get Enough Sleep

Sleep is necessary for good mental, physical, and emotional health. Avoid electronics and caffeine before bed. Keep a regular sleep schedule to get good quality sleep.

HOW TO FEEL BETTER IN 5 MINUTES

1. Put down your phone.
2. Stretch and breathe deeply.
3. Take a quick walk outside.
4. Write down how you feel.



ACTIVITY: Coping With Stress

Instructions: Below are healthy ways to cope with stress. Check the box next to any of the recommendations you currently follow.

- Take breaks from news stories, including on social media. It is good to be informed, but constant discouraging information can be upsetting.
- Stay up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines.
- Eat fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products. Limit saturated fats, cholesterol, salt, and added sugars.
- Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning, including on weekends. This can improve your sleep.
- Move more and sit less. Every bit of activity helps.
- Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Avoid using prescription drugs in ways other than prescribed. Do not take someone else's prescription or use illegal drugs.
- Avoid smoking and the use of tobacco products.
- Continue with regular health appointments.

DEPRESSION

Identifying and Coping with Depression

Depression is a mood disorder that affects how you feel, think, and behave. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. Depression is more than “the blues.” It is not a weakness, and it will not simply go away.

Symptoms of depression that last longer than two weeks need to be discussed with your doctor. Most people who have depression start to feel better with medication, therapy, or both.

Symptoms of Depression

- Thoughts of hurting yourself
- Fatigue
- Trouble concentrating
- Feelings of guilt and worthlessness
- Loss of interest in things that bring joy
- Not being able to sleep
- Irritability
- Overeating or loss of appetite

ACTIVITY: Depressed Thoughts

Instructions: Below are common thoughts and feelings associated with depression. Place a check mark in the box next to each of the thoughts and feelings you have had.

I am terribly lonely all the time, even when I'm with friends and loved ones.

I am exhausted all the time.

I have an overwhelming sense of sadness about life.

Just getting through the day feels like torture.

I feel like I will never be happy again, even though I know that is not true.

I feel misunderstood and ashamed.

I feel like everything is hopeless.

All I want to do is go home, curl up, and fall asleep forever.

What You Can Do About Depression

- Tell your medical doctor. Depression can last for years if left untreated. There are treatments available to help you cope with depression.
- Set realistic goals. Set priorities. Break things down into small tasks and tackle them one at a time.
- Try to be with other people. Talk to someone.
- Let your family and friends help you.
- Participate in activities that make you feel better, like exercise, church, movies, sports, and social activities.
- Do not make important decisions until your depression is lifted.
- It may take a while to get your first appointment with a mental health professional. Do not despair. Once you are a patient, appointments will be easier to make.

Coping Skills

Coping skills are activities you can use to reduce difficult thoughts. These skills can also help you to move forward when you are having tough times.

Everyone is different, so not all skills work for everyone. It is important to give a few different coping skills a try. Find what works for you. Do not forget to use these skills when you are overly stressed.

ACTIVITY: Useful Coping Skills

Instructions: Below is a list of activities that may help you cope with stress and anxiety. Place a check mark in the box next to each of the activities you have tried. You can write your own ideas in the spaces provided.

Call or visit friends or loved ones

Take a nap, a bath, or a hot shower

Listen to music, dance, and/or sing

Cook, garden, or do yard work

Recite daily devotionals or pray

Write in my journal

Watch a funny video or read something funny

Take a walk, stretch, or play a game or sport

List the things I am grateful for and that bring me joy

Make plans for the future and/or make a to-do list

Take deep breaths, visualize a peaceful place, and/or meditate

“In the Moment” Coping Skills for a Personal Time Out

Quick things to do when you are STRESSED OUT, HURT, UPSET, or about to BLOW UP:

- Slow in and out breathing
- Count backward from 20
- Give yourself a hug
- Tell yourself that your thoughts are just thoughts
- Tensing and relaxing
- Grounding: Name 5 things you can see, hear, and feel
- Self-talk (“I can handle this”)
- Snap a rubber band on your wrist
- Think about something funny
- Imagine a positive scene
- Spider push-ups (put fingers on one hand against fingers on the other and push in and out)



Be Accepting of Yourself

Treat yourself the way you would treat a good friend.

Deep Breathing

Deep breathing is a way to relax by purposefully taking slow, deep breaths. When practiced often, deep breathing exercises provide instant and long-term relief from stress and anxiety.

Square Breathing

1. Breathe slowly through your nose while counting to four.
2. Hold your breath and count to four.
3. Exhale slowly while counting to four.
4. Hold your breath and count to four.
5. Repeat.

Belly Breathing

1. Place your hands on your belly.
2. Take a deep breath, focusing on your belly expanding.
3. Hold your breath for a count of three.
4. Slowly exhale and repeat.



Journaling

Using a journal can help you to see your feelings on paper. It can help you to describe how you feel. You can use a notebook or computer to write down your thoughts and feelings.

You can keep these notes to look back on or share with others. You can also write them down and tear them up or delete them. It does not matter what you do with them because the important part is to release your thoughts and feelings and help you better understand yourself.

Journaling can be calming and clearing for your mind. It is a terrific way to release pent-up stress.

Tips for Journaling

- Use a notebook, pen, or computer.
- Keep your journal in your special place.
- Be open and honest.
- Write about upsetting emotional experiences.
- Write about positive things in your life.
- If you are spiritual, write down your prayers.

10 Journaling Prompts to Get You Started

- How do I feel today?
- How do I want to feel today?
- What do I need the most?
- What is my biggest lesson or achievement today?
This week? This month?
- The things that bring me joy are _____.
- I feel happiest when _____.
- How can I have more joy, happiness, and peace in my life?
- What changes do I need to make to feel healthier, happier, and more fulfilled?
- I want to forgive _____.
- The main cause of stress in my life is _____.

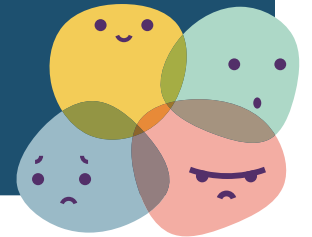
Organize Your Thoughts

Journaling is a great way to organize your thoughts and calm your mind.



Did You Know?

- Vitamin D from sunlight helps your body produce serotonin, which affects your mood.
- Helping others can help you feel better.
- Walking for just 30 minutes per day can boost your mood.
- Drinking water and staying hydrated are important for focus and emotional stability.
- Bananas, nuts, and oily fish (like salmon) are foods that can help keep you mentally well.
- Being grateful can boost your feelings of well-being.



Blessings Jar

Find a jar with a top. Decorate it if you like. Whenever you recognize something that is a “blessing” in your life, write it down on a piece of paper, fold it up, and stick it in the jar.

Dump the jar out and read your blessings before you start the new year. Look in your blessing jar throughout the year if you need a prompt for journaling. Simply pull out a blessing and write about it.

SELF-CARE

Activities to Improve Your Well-Being

Self-care activities are things you do to maintain good health and improve your well-being. Taking care of yourself helps you with your job, family, and supporting others who may need help.

Types of Self-Care

Physical

- Getting enough good sleep
- Strengthening the body with exercise
- Nourishing the body with healthy foods

Emotional

- Managing stress
- Journaling to organize thoughts
- Practicing coping skills

Social

- Engaging in friendships
- Setting healthy boundaries
- Moderating social media exposure

Spiritual

- Time alone for reflection
- Prayer and reading
- Spending time outside with nature

Work

- Exercising time management
- Taking breaks
- Balancing work and personal life

Financial

- Setting and following a budget
- Managing finances
- Paying bills on time
- Saving money

Personal

- Engaging in hobbies
- Setting personal goals
- Learning new things

ACTIVITY: My Daily Self-Care

Instructions: Look at the table below. On the left, you will see common feelings of distress. On the right, you will see coping skills to help you deal with difficult feelings.

Fill in the empty spaces on the left with other feelings you have experienced. Write in coping skills that you can use to help you in the future on the right.

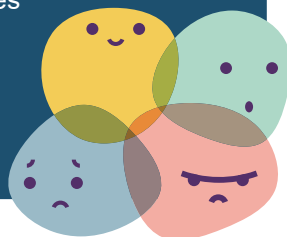
I feel...	I need to...
Overwhelmed	Take a step back
Stressed	Focus on relaxing
Anxious	Practice a coping skill
Sad	Be loving to myself
Angry	Breathe deeply and relax
Drained	Rest and recharge
Broken	Find the positive in myself
Upset	Take time for myself
Alone	Reach out for support

Staying Hydrated Improves Mental Wellness

- 73% of your brain is water.
- Dehydration can impact brain function.
- Drinking 6-8 glasses of water per day is recommended.

Signs of Dehydration

- Dry skin
- Sleeplessness
- Dry mouth
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Thirst



Asking for Help

Everyone knows the African proverb: “It takes a village to raise a child.” It takes an entire village of people to support each of us on this life journey. We do not mind asking for help when our bodies are sick. It is equally important to ask for help when our mind is stressed and we are emotionally exhausted. Know who the people are in your “village” so you can help each other.

It is important to share when you feel that your mental and emotional health are challenged. Talking can help us to understand our emotions and to see things in a different way. It is important to know that you are not alone. Your trusted village can help you. Talking helps other people to help us.

Who To Talk To?

When thinking about asking for help, ask yourself – “Do I really need to do this alone?”

Think about who you might want to talk to. Think about the people in your life who you can trust and the people to whom you are closest. A family member, a friend, or spiritual advisor are common sources of support. Sometimes it is easier to talk to people you do not know, like a professional counselor.

ACTIVITY: Define Your Village

Asking for help is not easy. You may feel awkward or ashamed, but your village is there to support you. They love you and will give you a chance to talk, cry, hug, and laugh. YOU are in control when you learn to ask for help.

Instructions: Identify five people you can turn to when you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or sad, and list their names below.

1

2

3

4

5

Let People In

Do not let pride rob you of your voice. People love you. Let them.

ACTIVITY: Identify Your Needs

Asking for help is not a sign of weakness, but of courage. You are in control when you choose to ask for help. Remember that asking for help is about what you need and deserve. Your friends and family will help you, but it is important to know what kind of help you need.

Instructions: Use the prompts below to help you identify some areas where support would benefit you.

Situations I need help with are:

Ways I can ask for help are:

Things to say when I need help include:

Talking to Spiritual Advisors

Many people feel the need to seek spiritual guidance when they are stressed. If your inclination is to hand over your problems to a higher power, this may be the perfect support outlet for you. No, a priest, minister, or church counselor cannot physically take away your anxiety or solve your problems. Yet, they can guide you to a path of peace and strength through spirituality.

Spiritual wellness is taking time to determine your purpose in life and understanding your personal impact on the rest of the world. You can find your own spiritual wellness through prayer, quiet time, and meditation.

Talking to Your Health Care Provider

Do not wait for your doctor to bring up your mental and emotional health. Take this opportunity to talk to your doctor if you are feeling anxious, depressed, or even overwhelmed. They can help by referring you to a mental health specialist.

Prepare ahead of your visit. Your health care provider has limited time to talk to you. Think of your questions and concerns beforehand and write them down. Take a list of your medications and include anything you take over the counter. Let your doctor know if there are any family mental health issues.

Bring a friend or family member. Sometimes it is helpful to have someone with you, especially if you are not feeling well. They can take notes and remember what your doctor said. They may also be able to offer some insight on how they think you are doing.

Be honest. Your health care provider can only help you with what you tell them. It is a private conversation that is confidential and cannot be shared with anyone without your permission. Describe all your symptoms and when they started. Examples of symptoms include:

- Sadness, anxiousness, and moodiness
- Hopelessness
- Feeling guilty, worthless, or helpless
- Loss of interest in things you enjoy
- Decreased energy and tiredness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite or weight changes
- Unexplained aches, pains, headaches, or digestive problems
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Ask questions. There is no “one size fits all” treatment. You may have to try different things to find what works best for you. Remember to ask questions and be honest.

What to Say to a Friend Who Is Struggling Mentally and Emotionally

We all go through tough times. You can help a friend by letting them talk and express their feelings. It might provide comfort to give an example of a time you or someone you know struggled and needed support. Validate what they are saying. Respect their trust and do not share what they have told you without permission.

You can feel better. Let them know that reaching out and talking is the first step to feeling better. Let them know that there is hope and mental health problems are treatable.

It is OK to ask for help. Remember that our past, cultures, and experiences have an impact on how we seek help. Some people come from families or cultures who view asking for help or seeking mental health counseling as shameful or weak. Thinking about why your friend might not want help can be important in helping them find support. Ask how you can best help them.

How To Respond To A Friend Needing Help

Listen closely to what they are saying and respond with compassion. Try:

- “That must be so hard.”
- “I am sorry you are going through this.”
- “It is normal to have these feelings right now.”

FOR MEN

Information Specific to Men



Did You Know?

- Six million American men experience depression each year.
- Men are four times more likely than women to die of suicide.
- Men may be more likely to use drugs or alcohol as a means of coping with mental health issues.
- Work stress and a lack of social support have been linked to a higher likelihood of mental health issues in men.
- Men are less likely to seek help for depression, substance abuse, and stressful life events. This is due to social and cultural norms, difficulty talking about problems, and downplaying symptoms.
- One in ten American men suffer from rage.
- Mental health issues have a greater impact on men's physical health.
- "Real men" DO ask for help!

Benefits of Seeking Help

- Helps you to understand your condition.
- Reduces symptoms and improves quality of life.
- Gives you the power to set and achieve goals.
- Improves your ability to deal with stress.
- Helps to improve relationships.
- Reduces or gets rid of negative and destructive behaviors.

When to Get Help for Anger

- Happens often and is intense.
- Causes problems in your relationships.
- Has caused a problem in your job.
- Has resulted in destruction of property.
- Has resulted in injury to you or someone else.

Three Quick Ways to Deal with Anger

1. Take deep stomach breaths. Inhale and count to five. Exhale and count to five. Repeat.
2. Walk away from triggers. Return when calm.
3. Count backward from ten.

How to “Center” Mental Health for Men

- C** **Catching** and stopping myself when I start putting myself down in my head.
- E** **Embracing** having more emotionally real conversations with my masculine/friends/bros.
- N** **Naming** the fact that I cannot control other people’s actions. Focusing on my own instead.
- T** **Taking** time to express my feelings instead of detaching, distracting, or avoiding them.
- E** **Easing** the grind by asking for help from others and accepting it freely.
- R** **Remembering** that I am enough. I do not have to prove my manhood or my worth by overworking or being “tough” or “strong.”

Four Habits of Mentally Healthy Men

- **Healthy Body:** Eat well, exercise, reduce alcohol
- **Healthy Lifestyle:** Balance work and social time
- **Healthy Mindset:** Set goals, reprogram negative thoughts
- **Healthy Connections:** Focus on strengthening positive relationships with others

RESOURCES

Agencies and Services Ready to Support You

Seek professional help when something disrupts your life daily and continues for a couple of weeks or longer. This may include thoughts of harming yourself or others.

211

211 helps you to gain access to all community resources.

- Dial 2-1-1 or text 888-421-1266.
- Chat online at 211connectsalabama.org.

988 Mental Health and Suicide Lifeline

988 is available 24 hours a day, nationwide. It is staffed by trained crisis counselors for individuals experiencing a mental health, substance abuse, or suicide crisis. Your call is confidential.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental or emotional health crisis, call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers

For older individuals, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers. Access Medicare and Medicaid assistance, crisis support, prescription drug assistance, caregiver assistance, and a screening for all programs and services.

- 1-800-AGE-LINE (1-800-243-5463)

Connect Alabama App

Behavioral health services and treatment finder that provides individuals with access to education, information, and services related to substance abuse, mental health, and prevention.

The app is available for download on iOS through the App Store and for Android devices via Google Play.

The Emotional PPE Project

Connects health care workers in need with licensed mental health professionals who can help. No cost. No insurance needed. Just a trained professional to talk to.

- emotionalppe.org

Mental Health America

Find educational resources and self-screen for a variety of mental and emotional wellness conditions.

- mhanational.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness

- nami.org and namialabama.org
- Call the helpline at 1-800-950-6264 or text “helpline” to 62640
- Alabama Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255

Veterans Crisis Line

- Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1
- Chat online: veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat
- Text 838255

Wings Across Alabama

Staffed by Certified Peer Specialists who have personal experience with mental illness, including stigma, feeling overwhelmed, loneliness, thoughts of suicide, challenges of poverty, and more.

Call to have a confidential conversation with someone who will listen without judgment or criticism.

- 1-844-999-4647
- wingsacrossal.org

Only call 911 for:

- Medical emergencies
- Fires
- Crimes in progress
- When you or someone you care for feels at risk of danger
- Vehicle collisions

Take a Short Survey for a Chance to Win a \$100 Gift Card



Tell us if this toolkit helped you understand and cope with the mental and emotional challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

How to enter:

- 1 Scan the QR code below or visit bit.ly/OKSURVEY.
- 2 Completed surveys submitted by 5pm on February 14, 2023 will be entered into a drawing to win one of three \$100 gift cards.
- 3 Surveys must include contact info to be entered into the drawing.
- 4 One entry per person allowed.





Mental Health America in Montgomery

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