

MANAGING REACTIONS TO CORONAVIRUS: SELF-CARE STRATEGIES

Learning about the spread of a new disease can be scary. It's important for you to prioritize your own self-care to help you cope with any unsettling emotions this situation can bring. Self-care means making the choice to act in healthy ways rather than just reacting to events. Here are some self-care reminders that you may find helpful.

Physical coping strategies

- › **Getting enough sleep to feel rested** is a key ingredient of self-care. It impacts both mood and energy level. Establish a routine and get to bed at a reasonable hour.
- › **Physical activity** is a good way to reduce feelings of stress and tension. It will also help you sleep better, if it's done at least several hours before bedtime. Talk to your doctor before starting any exercise routine.
- › Eat **well-balanced meals** at regular times of the day.
- › Nurture yourself by **doing something calming and relaxing**. Deep breathing, meditation and progressive relaxation can help you de-stress. But simply doing activities you enjoy can also help release tension.
- › **Avoid alcohol and drugs** as a means to cope, unless your doctor gives you a needed prescription.

Mental coping strategies

- › **Get the facts** about the problem from the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), rather than relying on the social media and television to provide information.
- › **Give your thoughts a break** from focusing on the "what-ifs" that scare you. Concentrate on the here and now needs of your loved ones, activities you enjoy, and the practical things you need to get done.

- › **Structure your time.** Large blocks of unstructured time will tempt your thoughts to center endlessly around what troubles you most. This can make your interpretation of what's happening more upsetting than it actually is.
- › **Remind yourself of your abilities and strengths.** Self-statements such as "I can handle this uncertainty" get you back in touch with the fact that you're steering your own ship – you're not a bottle tossing and turning on life's seas.
- › **Set short-term goals.** What are some things that you want to get done in the next hour? The next day? The next week? Focus on short-term accomplishments to help you feel more in control.

Emotional coping strategies

- › **Reach out to people who care and give voice** to your feelings and fears. Talk out your thoughts and worries with loved ones.
- › **Spend time doing enjoyable activities.**
- › **Have realistic expectations for yourself.** There are many unknowns in this situation, for which you cannot have the answer. You can't control every outcome. Give yourself a break and realize you are doing the best you can.

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FINDING CHILD CARE RESOURCES DURING THESE CHALLENGING TIMES

Cigna Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

CDC- Checklist for Teachers and Parents:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/checklist.html>

Locating Day Care Centers, Family Day Care Homes, and Child Care Financial Assistance:

Child Care Aware: <http://www.childcareaware.org/resources/map>

National Database of Child Care: <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/licensing>

Office of Child Care: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-grantee-state-and-territory-contacts>

Babysitter and Nanny Resources:

The websites listed below are online posting boards that help families find a nanny or babysitter independent of a placement agency. These sites allow parents to place an advertisement for a caregiver or browse the resumes of nannies and babysitters who are looking for a child care position. Please note that there may be fees associated with these services and that parents are responsible for checking references. Some sites partner with background check agencies, and services are available for an additional fee. Please click on the following links for additional information:

<http://www.gonannies.com>

<https://www.care4hire.com>

<http://www.care.com>

<https://www.nannylane.com>

<https://www.seekingsitters.com>

<http://www.sittercity.com>

Also, listed below is the contact information for nanny agencies that place caregivers nationwide. Please keep in mind that in providing a list, we have not confirmed if these agencies place caregivers in your area. You may wish to contact these agencies for additional information.

Heartland Estate Staffing

P.O. Box 16623

Missoula, MT 59808

406-542-0241

<http://www.estatestaffing.com>

Nanny Poppins, Inc.

4 Rex Lane

Acton, MA 01720

888-849-6090

<https://nannypoppinsagency.com/>

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ARE YOU IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP?

The following are some of the ways a partner may try to gain power and control in a relationship. These behaviors can be predictive of partner violence. These behaviors in a relationship can be a cause for concern.

Isolation

A partner may try to control what you do, where you go and who you talk to in order to keep you cut off from others.

Does your partner:

- › Check up on you to make sure you are where you said you'd be?
- › Tell you that you can't go out with friends or family?
- › Accuse you of cheating when you are out with friends, coworkers or family?
- › Attempt to monitor your phone calls and email?
- › Only want you to talk to certain people?

Emotional abuse

A partner who emotionally abuses you is trying to make you feel bad about yourself and unworthy of good treatment or attention.

Does your partner:

- › Call you names or embarrass you in front of your friends, coworkers or family?
- › Put down your accomplishments?
- › Tell you that you're crazy when you express your feelings?
- › Call you fat, ugly, stupid, worthless or other demeaning names?

Intimidation

A partner may try to intimidate you to make you feel scared and helpless.

Does your partner:

- › Punch walls, throw objects, kick things or have other violent outbursts when he or she is upset?
- › Make you feel like you have to watch what you say or do?
- › Destroy your or your children's personal belongings?
- › Make you scared by giving you certain looks?

Physical abuse and threats

A partner may use physical abuse to scare you if you do something that makes them mad. He or she also may threaten you to keep you from doing things he or she doesn't like.

Does your partner:

- › Hit, push, bite, choke or grab you? Studies have found that women who have been strangled by their partner are seven times more likely to be killed by them (Floyd, 2016).
- › Threaten to commit suicide if you leave?
- › Force or pressure you to do sexual acts that make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe?
- › Make you feel there is no way out of the relationship?

Economic abuse

A partner may use money to keep you under their control. It can be hard for people to leave a violent partner if they have no source of their own income. Sometimes the thought of not having any financial support is more terrifying than the abuse itself.

Does your partner:

- › Give you an allowance or make you ask for money?
- › Make you feel like you could not survive financially without them?
- › Prevent you from getting a job or having any income?
- › Take your money?

Male privilege/gender stereotypes

This is a common tactic abusive partners use to gain control. They may say things like, “A good wife always does xyz,” or “Women belong in the kitchen,” or “A real man would be able to take it.”

Does your partner:

- › Make all the decisions?
- › Make you wait on them like a servant?
- › Not let you talk when you are out in public?
- › Treat you like you're their property and they own you?

Blame/deny/minimize/make excuses

A partner will blame, deny, make excuses and minimize after the abuse has already occurred to make themselves feel better and make you feel worse.

Does your partner:

- › Blame you for their feelings and actions? For example, “You asked for it” or “You made me mad.”
- › Deny the abuse ever happened?
- › Make you feel like the abuse was not a big deal and that you are overreacting?
- › Make excuses for the abuse? For example, “I had a bad day.” or “I’ve been under a lot of pressure lately.”

Use children

A partner may use children to make you feel guilty or to scare you away from leaving them.

Does your partner:

- › Threaten to take your children away?
- › Tell you that if you leave you are hurting the children by breaking up the family?
- › Threaten to harm the children?
- › Tell the children bad things about you?

If you checked many of these behaviors... you may be involved in an unhealthy relationship. If you are in this situation, it's important to remember that it's not your fault. Help is available. For more information or to get help, you can contact your Employee Assistance Program.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (TDD 1-800-787-3224)

This hotline is another source of help. It offers crisis intervention, information about sources of assistance and referrals for shelters, programs, social service agencies, legal programs and other helpful organizations.

References

Domestic Abuse Intervention Project. (n.d.). Power and control wheel. Retrieved from <http://www.ncdsv.org/images/powercontrolwheelnoshading.pdf>

Floyd, B. (2016). Strangulation: a concerning type of domestic abuse. Retrieved from <https://www.strangulationtraininginstitute.com/strangulation-concerning-type-domestic-abuse/>

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HOW TO HELP SOMEONE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

It may be hard to know what to do if you think your friend, family member or coworker is in an abusive relationship. You may want to keep the following tips in mind when you are trying to help someone in an abusive relationship.

Be available to help, but don't try to force a particular course of action.

- › Let them know that you're there to support them.
- › Do not push them to make a change that they're not ready to make.
- › Remember there can be many reasons a person believes he or she needs to stay in an abusive relationship.

Listen without judging.

- › People in abusive relationships may already have negative feelings about themselves. They may feel shame and embarrassment about their situation.
- › Try not to pass judgment. This will add to their negative feelings.
- › Ask permission before you make any suggestions.
- › Do not take it personally if they don't take your advice.

Help with "reality checks."

- › Make sure the person knows that what his or her partner is doing is not okay. No one "deserves" abusive treatment. Many people in an abusive situation don't know what a healthy relationship looks like.
- › Let them know that the abuse is not their fault.
- › Point out that physical or emotional abuse in a relationship is not acceptable.

Respect confidentiality.

- › If your friend, family member or coworker chooses not to tell anyone except you, respect their privacy. It could be a matter of safety as well as confidentiality.
- › If you have concerns that keeping the situation private may endanger the person or others, contact one of the resources listed below for help.

Consider ways you are willing to help if they leave.

- › If the person decides to leave the relationship, he or she may need help finding a place to stay, a place to store belongings, help with childcare, or help getting to a shelter.
- › Help them develop a safety plan.
- › Make sure to consider your own safety needs. Do not put yourself in a position of risk. Think about what you are willing and able to provide when the time comes.

Make them aware of local resources.

- › You can help by providing information about domestic violence resources and safety planning. Often people in abusive relationships are unable to safely research this on their own.
- › Remember, you may not be able to help the person in an abusive relationship. You may want to contact one of the resources below for additional information and support. You don't have to do this alone.
- › Even if you don't know the full story, you can still connect with resources out of concern for someone else.

Domestic violence resources

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (TDD 1-800-787-3224)

Offers crisis intervention, information about sources of help and referrals for shelters, programs, social service agencies, legal programs and other helpful organizations.

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

www.ncadv.org

Get information on developing a safety plan. Find national crises organizations and local resources listed by state.

U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women

www.justice.gov/ovw

Offers information on federal laws as well as links to state and local resources.

Domestic Shelter Locator

www.domesticshelters.org

This online search tool can be used to find help for domestic violence in your zip code and your language.

Warning signs of an abusive relationship

- › Downplaying visible signs of physical injury
- › Using excuses that don't make sense to explain injuries (for example, using the excuse "I fell down the stairs" to explain a black eye)
- › Fearfulness when a partner's name is mentioned
- › Crying for no apparent reason
- › Blaming themselves for their partner's behavior
- › Receiving harassing phone calls, e-mails, or texts
- › Becoming upset when receiving phone calls at work
- › Telling concerning stories about family/personal life
- › Having a partner who makes all of the decisions
- › Having a partner who only allows them to talk to certain people

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PARTNER VIOLENCE: SAFETY PLANNING

It's important to know what to do if you are in or planning to leave an abusive relationship. Many times the abuse becomes more violent when an abuser suspects his or her partner is leaving and after he or she has left. It's also important to consider a workplace safety plan. Planning ahead may help you reduce the risk of violence.

If you are living with an abusive partner:

- › Avoid rooms with no exits, or rooms with potential weapons (like the kitchen).
- › Be aware that your partner may attempt to track you electronically (checking web history, calls, text messages, etc.).
- › Hide documentation of abuse in a safe place. Consider storing with a friend, relative, or in a place the abuser can't access.
- › If you have contact with law enforcement, get the name and badge number of the officer(s) you talk to.

If you are planning to leave:

- › Know how to get into a shelter or other safe place before you go.
- › Go to a hospital or police station if a family member's home or shelter is not an option.
- › Collect important phone numbers you'll need.
- › Keep an extra set of car keys.
- › Safely store medical records, pictures, journals or police reports that document the abuse.
- › Try to put aside emergency money.
- › Pack a bag of clothes to take with you.
- › Teach your children about escape routes.
- › Practice getting out safely.
- › Open a bank account in your name only.
- › Keep a phone hidden inside a room in your home that locks from the inside.
- › Program emergency numbers into your phone(s).
- › Make an arrangement with a family member or friend to call them at a certain time each day.
- › You may want to store all items you want to take with someone you trust a few days before you go.

Consider taking the following items when you go:

Identification

- › Driver's license / passport
- › Social security card / birth certificate
- › Insurance information

Financial information

- › Credit cards/ATM cards
- › Checking / savings account information
- › Savings bonds
- › Partner's employer information

Legal documents

- › Copies of protective order, if you have one
- › Records of prior abuse
- › Medical and school records
- › Separation/custody records
- › Marriage license
- › Rental agreement/deed to home
- › Power of attorney/will

Other

- › Medications/prescriptions
- › Keys to home and vehicles
- › Pictures, clothes, toys and valuables

If you are planning to leave - continued:

Other precautions may help ensure the safety of you and your family after you leave. You may want to:

- › Try to change your routines.
- › Get advice from professionals to plan on how you will handle a confrontation with the abuser.
- › Consider carrying pepper spray to protect yourself.
- › Contact your wireless carrier to disable tracking and block calls.
- › Give the post office your change of address.
- › Get an unlisted phone number.
- › Change the locks on your doors. Add dead bolts or a security system.
- › Look into getting protection order. If you have one, file charges if the order is violated.
- › If the abuser doesn't have legal rights to see your children, you may want to:
 - Give copies of legal documentation to your children's caregivers and/or school.
 - Give school/caregivers pictures of the abuser.
 - Educate children on what to do if the abuser shows up at their day care, home, activities or school.

References

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (n.d.). Planning ahead. Retrieved from <http://ncadv.org/learn-more/get-help/planning-ahead>

In the workplace:

If you are being abused by your partner or ex-partner, you may be in danger even at work. A workplace safety plan is wise. You may decide who will be involved and what information will be shared. Consider including a supervisor, human resource manager, company and/or building security and/or employee assistance counselor.

Every situation is different. Consider what might be helpful and possible at your workplace. None of these steps can guarantee safety, but they may help:

- › Ask your leadership the best steps to take to ensure your safety at work. You will want to loop in security.
- › If you are threatened at work, bring immediately it to the attention of your manager.
- › Give your security department a description of the abuser's vehicle and license plate number. A photo of your partner or ex-partner is also helpful.
- › Park in a space that is well-lit, out in the open and close to the entrance door(s).
- › Look for your abuser before leaving the building and before parking or turning off the car.
- › Arrange for someone, preferably a security guard, to walk with you to and from your car.
- › If possible, arrange your work hours so that you are coming and leaving work at different times. Not everyone can do this, but do try to change up your routines.
- › Keep all threatening e-mails, voicemails, letters, and texts. They may be proof a protection order is being disobeyed.
- › If possible, ask to move your workspace to a less visible spot. Try not to be in an area where you can be seen from the street or parking lot.
- › Transfer any calls from your partner or ex-partner to security, if you can. Ask if your number can be changed or routed differently. Find out if your workplace can screen your calls.
- › Make sure your workplace is listed on any protection order if you have one. Your employer, security and receptionist should all have copies.
- › Contact your employee assistance program for confidential resources and referrals

REASSURING CHILDREN

Coronavirus Fears & Concerns

Kids today are as exposed to the news cycle as adults are, but they have less life experience to interpret what they're seeing and hearing. Your job isn't to shelter them from the news; it's to help them understand and process it. Children of all ages want reassurance that their family will be safe.

Talk about it

Monitor and talk about what they see on the news.

Be aware of what your children are exposed to (including via digital devices) and set limits. Watch the news with them and discuss it afterwards. Talk with teens about the importance of getting information from reputable sources and share examples, such as CDC.

Encourage your children to talk to you about their thoughts and feelings.

Let them express fears, thoughts and worries. Be supportive and sympathetic, but avoid overreacting. Be ready for hard questions: "Will I get sick?" "What if it happened to you or Dad?"

Give direct, age appropriate answers. Children need facts to process what's going on and understand what it means. Be honest but sensitive in how you answer. Keep including messages of reassurance: "We're going to do everything we can to stay healthy."

Offer only as much information as they request.

Sometimes our own discomfort can push us to keep talking and we end up on shaky ground. Listen to what they're asking and answer that question. Period. It's okay to say you don't have all the answers.

Reduce anxiety, build up resilience

Reassure with words. Talk about safety precautions that public health officials, your community, doctors, and your own family are taking to stay safe.

Reassure with actions. Maintain family routines, particularly around meals and bedtimes. Express your love out loud. Make time to do things together, such as riding bikes, taking a walk, reading together, or playing board games as a family. Structure and normalcy feel safe.

Don't expect your child to take care of *your* fears.

For example, don't keep your child home from school because you are anxious about being apart from them. Find help to cope with your own fears.

You know your child's personality and behavior patterns.

If you see changes that concern you, and they go on for more than a couple of weeks, contact a mental health professional. Your EAP can help.

Common stress reactions in children

- › Sleep problems
- › Changes in bowel or bladder habits
- › Change in appetite – eating more/less than usual
- › Downward change in grades or behavior at school
- › Talking about a variety of physical complaints
- › Moodiness, irritability, fighting
- › Inattentiveness, inability to concentrate
- › Withdrawing, not talking
- › Being overly emotional for no clear reason
- › Fear of losing/separating from caregivers

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PARTNER VIOLENCE RESOURCES

If you or someone you know – a friend, neighbor, family member, or coworker – is in an abusive relationship, help is available.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

For deaf and hard of hearing: TTY: 1-800-787-3224

Offers crisis intervention, information about sources of help and referrals for shelters, programs, social service agencies, legal programs and other helpful organizations.

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

www.ncadv.org

Get information on developing a safety plan. Find national crises organizations and local resources listed by state.

U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women

www.justice.gov/ovw

Offers information on federal laws and links to state and local resources.

Domestic Shelter Locator

www.domesticshelters.org

This online search tool can be used to find help for domestic violence in your zip code and your language.



**Your EAP is also
available 24/7 with
support and resources.**

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RESOURCES FOR SUSPECTED CHILD OR ELDER ABUSE

Children and seniors can be at an even higher risk of abuse when times are challenging. Below are resources that offer crisis intervention support and guidance on what to do if you suspect abuse, neglect, or maltreatment of a child or senior.

In the event of an emergency or if you or someone you know is in immediate, life-threatening danger, **call the police or 911.**

Child abuse and neglect resources:

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-4-A-CHILD (TDD 1-800-422-4453)

www.childhelp.org

Call or text 24/7 for confidential access to professional crisis counselors.

Child Welfare Information Gateway

www.childwelfare.gov

- › How to report suspected child abuse:
www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/reporting/how
- › State child abuse and neglect reporting phone numbers:
www.childwelfare.gov/organizations/?CWIGFunctionsacti
- › Recognizing signs and symptoms:
www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan/

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

CyberTipline: 1-800-THE LOST (TDD 1-800-843-5678)

www.missingkids.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline

Call for help if you suspect a child is being exploited online.

Elder abuse and neglect resources:

National Adult Protective Services Association

- › What is abuse?
www.napsa-now.org/get-informed/what-is-abuse
- › What is neglect?
www.napsa-now.org/get-informed/what-is-neglect
- › Get help in your area:
www.napsa-now.org/get-help/help-in-your-area

U.S. Administration on Aging: Eldercare Locator

800-677-1116

<https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx>

Use the online locator by entering your zip code to locate community resources. To report suspected maltreatment, select “Elder Abuse Prevention” from the dropdown.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (TDD 1-800-787-3224)

www.thehotline.org/help

Offers crisis intervention, information about sources of help and referrals for shelters, programs, social service agencies, legal programs and other helpful organizations.

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