

SAFETY & LOSS PREVENTION

OUTLOOK

MENTAL HEALTH

KEEPING SAFE & STAYING
SANE IN A TIME OF
UNPRECEDENTED CRISIS

ALSO INSIDE:

- What COVID-19 means for hurricane preparations
- How to create a laptop workstation at home





The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the health and well-being of millions of people, creating challenges that require additional resources, significant efforts, and creative solutions.

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In a Pandemic, Mental Health Becomes a Crisis of its Own

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the health and well-being of millions of people, creating challenges that require additional resources, significant efforts, and creative solutions.

The stress and exhaustion of working in the COVID-19 response is natural, given the difficult demands. Concerns about contracting the virus, changes to employment, financial worries, homeschooling of children, and lack of physical contact with friends and loved ones can quickly take a toll. Stressors such as these can frequently trigger mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse.

SALT IN AN OPEN WOUND

Mental health conditions were already on the rise in every country around the world even before the pandemic began, with about 450 million people living with mental disorders (World Economic Forum, 2018). According to the National Institute for Mental Health, more than 16 million adults in the U.S. suffer at least one major depressive episode each year. The current pandemic state will cause an even greater need for psychological and social support as we address the physical and mental health of the world's population.

**Depression &
Mental Health
Screening Month**
**WORLD MENTAL
HEALTH DAY**



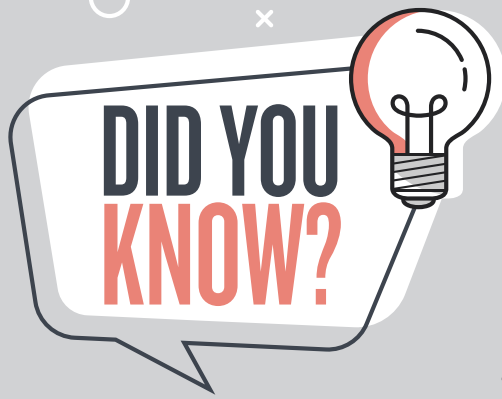
Healthcare workers and other essential employees now find themselves confronted daily with the threat of illness or death. Additionally, many people suddenly find themselves in the position of primary caretaker for their loved ones' health needs, without the necessary support they may have ordinarily received. Physical distancing and lockdowns have caused a reduction in in-person medical services — healthcare workers have had to close facilities and/or innovate new ways of serving the needs of the population — all at a time of increased demand for medical care. Mental health experts say the consequences of this will resonate for years to come, as they suggest the real impact will be felt once life starts to get back to “normal,” and people will begin reacting to their losses with post-trauma symptoms such as depression, anger, and anxiety (World Federation of Mental Health, April 2020).

SOUND MIND, SOUND BODY

This idea has been espoused for millennia, from ancient Greeks to the modern day. In 1999, U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher stated “There is no health without mental health,” and research continues to support this mind/body connection.

Look at the statistics:

- People with severe mental health conditions die prematurely – as much as two decades sooner than those without mental illness.
- Depression is one of the leading causes of disability, and people of all ages, races, genders, and socioeconomic groups can be affected.
- Individuals with a history of anxiety are 30% more likely to be obese.
- People who survive heart attacks but suffer from major depression have a 3-4 times greater risk of dying within six months than those without depression.



According to the World Health Organization, one person in every four will be affected by a mental disorder at some stage of their lives.

Every 40 seconds, one person dies by suicide (800,000 people per year – more than war and homicide combined), and even more attempt suicide.



COMMON DISORDERS & SYMPTOMS

Being familiar with the symptoms of mental disorders can make it easier to recognize them and get treatment in a timely fashion. Mental health screenings should be a routine part of healthcare, yet only about a third of those experiencing symptoms seek treatment from a mental health professional.

Health screenings provide a simple and quick way to identify risks for and first signs of serious illness, both physical and mental. A mental health screening can indicate the presence or absence of symptoms and determine whether a person should follow up with a mental health professional. A screening is not a professional diagnosis, but it is often the first step in getting treatment. If you experience five or more of the symptoms of mental health issues for longer than two weeks, or if the symptoms are severe enough to interfere with your daily routine, contact your doctor.

Mental Health America provides several DIY screening tests to help determine if it is time to talk to a doctor.

SCREENINGS CAN HELP CATCH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS EARLY B4STAGE4.



If you think you may be showing signs of a depressive disorder, click here to take a screening test.

A screening is not a diagnosis, but it can be a helpful tool for starting a conversation with your doctor or a loved one about your mental health.

www.mhascreening.org | Anonymous | Free | Confidential

Major Depressive Disorder

Depression, otherwise known as Major Depressive Disorder, is more than just a bout of “the blues,” but a serious medical illness that can lead to or complicate other physical health problems, such as cardiac disease, diabetes, and cancer. Symptoms can be:

Physical:

- Headaches / backaches (without other injury or cause)
- Changes in sleep habits (insomnia, sleeping more than usual)
- Changes in appetite / weight loss or gain
- Fatigue / loss of energy

Behavioral:

- Decreased motivation
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Disengagement / loss of pleasure from activities once enjoyed
- Lack of care for oneself (not bathing, not eating, etc.)
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering things, or making decisions
- Restlessness / irritability

or Emotional:

- Feeling sad, angry, empty, or afraid
- Thoughts of suicide or death

People who suffer from depression typically experience multiple episodes throughout their life, during which symptoms occur most of the day, nearly every day.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Brief feelings of anxiety are normal, typically lasting anywhere from a

few minutes to a few days. But for some, these feelings may continue for weeks, months, or even years, sometimes becoming severe enough to interfere with daily life.

Symptoms can be:

Physical:

- Rapid heart rate
- Rapid breathing or hyperventilation
- Increased or heavy sweating
- Trembling or muscle spasms
- Weakness or lethargy
- Digestive or gastrointestinal issues, such as diarrhea or stomach pain

Behavioral:

- Difficulty focusing or thinking clearly
- Eating too much or too little
- Changes in sleep habits
- Obsessive thoughts or ideas (can be indicative of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD))

or Emotional:

- Nervousness or tension
- Feelings of panic or dread
- Restlessness

Severe anxiety disorder can manifest as a panic attack, which is the sudden onset of fear or distress. Symptoms may include chest pain, dizziness, palpitations, sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, numbness or tingling, nausea, feeling detached from reality, fear of “going crazy,” and fear of dying. Panic attacks often mimic other conditions such as heart attacks, strokes, and asthma.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

This disorder begins after a traumatic event, such as physical abuse, an accident, military combat, or a natural disaster (such as the COVID-19 pandemic). People with PTSD feel a heightened sense of danger, even when they are safe, and often experience symptoms of depression and/or anxiety disorders, in addition to the following symptoms:

- Flashbacks / vivid memories of the event
- Frequent nightmares about the event
- Intense mental or physical distress when remembering the event
- Avoiding people, places, or situations that remind one of the event
- Feeling on edge / startling easily
- Negative thoughts / distorted feelings of guilt, worry, or blame associated with the event

Most people who get treatment (medication, psychotherapy, or a combination of the two) for these mental illnesses see improvements. If these symptoms begin affecting one’s ability to function in daily life, professional support may be needed.

Tips for Talking With Your Health Care Provider About Your Mental Health



Talk to your
primary care
provider



Prepare ahead
of your visit



Bring a friend
or relative



Be honest



Ask Questions

SIGNS THAT A PERSON MAY BE IN NEED OF IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE:

INABILITY TO CARE FOR ONESELF / PERFORM BASIC TASKS
FEAR OR ANXIETY THAT DOES NOT SUBSIDE
CRYING, SHAKING, SHOUTING, ACTS OF VIOLENCE
TALK OF SELF-HARM OR INJURING OTHERS
DISORIENTATION / CONFUSION
WITHDRAWING FROM FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES

IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY BEING TREATED FOR A MENTAL ILLNESS:

- Have a support system in place made up of people you can contact in a crisis.
- Be aware of the increased risk of relapse into mental illness — especially substance abuse. Continue to comply with your treatment regimen, attend doctor appointments, take medications as prescribed, etc.

IF YOU THINK YOU MAY HURT YOURSELF, ENGAGE IN DANGEROUS ACTIVITIES, OR ATTEMPT SUICIDE, IMMEDIATELY CALL 911

or your local emergency number, your doctor or mental health professional, or a suicide hotline number — in the U.S., call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**.



MAINTAINING MENTAL HEALTH

Adapting to lifestyle changes in the face of the COVID-19 epidemic can be a challenge. In the same way that a car needs fuel to drive, you need to look after yourself and keep your tank “full” so you can keep going. Re-responding to the COVID-19 pandemic is a marathon, not a sprint, so maintain your reserves by paying attention to your well-being on a daily basis. Here are some ways you can maintain your mental health during this crisis.

Maintain a Routine

- Doing things on a regular schedule every day can help to keep your mind and body on track.
- Have a regular wake-up time and bedtime, and eat meals and snacks at regular hours as much as possible.
- Keep up with personal hygiene — letting your physical appearance and cleanliness slip can often take your mental health with it.

Balance Mind and Body, Work and Play

- When working from home, avoid allowing the temptations and responsibilities to pull you away from your work duties, as falling behind

could lead to anxiety and depression. On the other hand, don’t allow your work day to bleed into your off hours.

- Allocate time for both productivity and relaxation — do something you find enjoyable and/or meaningful every day (e.g. reading, music, art, cooking, dancing, learning a new skill). To combat anxiety, try a relaxing activity such as yoga, slow breathing, stretching, or meditation.
- Use social media and news websites to connect with others, and get information from reliable sources (such as the CDC, or your local county government website). Be wary of misinformation, and back away from sites that contribute to your anxiety, stress, or depression. Try reading the news only at specific times of day, and then focus on other things.
- Limit screen time. Take regular breaks from on-screen activities such as television, video games, and social media.
- Make a list of things for which you are grateful each day.

Distance Physically, Not Socially

The reality is that people need social contact, and many people are struggling without it. It is imperative for good mental health that we find ways to socialize in safe ways.

- Use technology — keep in regular contact with friends and loved ones by telephone, email, video conference, social media, etc.
- Have physically distanced meetups — go to a park or an outdoor event where you can maintain a safe distance. Can't find an event? Try hosting a movie night in your backyard using a projector and out-door seating.
- Pour your heart out — have a trusted friend or relative with whom you can talk about your feelings.
- Create a quarantine “bubble” or “pod” — find another family with whom to socialize exclusively. In a bubble, families agree to spend time only with each other in order to keep everyone safe. Inside the bubble, the recommended rules of physical distancing can be abandoned with limited risk — kids can play together, friends can hug, food can

be shared, either with or without masks. Click here for more information on the ins and outs of starting a social pod: www.nytimes.com/2020/06/09/parenting/coronavirus-pod-family.html

Stay Active

- Go outside — Even if you are working from home, getting outside even for a few minutes a day can improve your mood. Take a walk, visit a local park, or even just step out onto the porch for some fresh air and a new perspective.
- Exercise — Keeping your body healthy means maintaining strength and flexibility, even if you can't go to the gym. Here are some exercises you can do at home to keep your body mobile: www.healthline.com/health/fitness-exercise/joint-mobility-exercises

You Are What You Eat (And Drink)

Eating healthy foods can help support a strong immune system to fight in-fectious and reduce the chance of developing chronic illnesses such as heart disease and cancer.

- Maintain a healthy diet by eating a variety of foods, such as fruits, veg-etables, whole grains, beans, nuts, lean meats (such as chicken or fish), and lowfat dairy products.
- Limit fats and oils — choose healthier options like olive oil over butter when cooking. Steam, grill or boil foods instead of frying.
- Limit salt intake — be wary of processed foods, as they often contain high amounts of sodium.
- Limit sugar — the easiest way is to cut out beverages such as sodas and juices. Remember that even “healthier” options like 100% fruit juice contain high amounts of sugar. Drink plenty of water instead, or mix fruit juice

with sparkling water for a healthier alternative to soda.

- Limit alcohol and drugs (including caffeine and nicotine) — these sub-stances can lead to depression, anxiety, insomnia, and aggressive be-havior, and can also lower your immune response.

Contrary to some claims, alcohol has no protective effect for viral or other types of infections. In fact, use of alcohol has been associated with in-creased risk of infection and worse treatment outcomes. In addition, alco-hol and drug use have been known to lower one's inhibitions, which may cause individuals to take insufficient precautions against infection, such as neglecting hand hygiene and physical distancing.

Help Yourself, Your Coworkers, Your Community

Managers and supervisors play a crucial role in ensuring the health and safety of their employees, and a supportive work environment can help promote physical and mental well-being.

- Prepare and train staff in protective and preventive measures (e.g., use of PPE, physical distancing, self-isolation, etc.)
- Educate staff and encourage self-care strategies (as listed above).
- Lead by example by modeling healthy work behaviors (taking precau-tions seriously, not overworking, modeling kindness, and compassion toward others).
- Have regular meetings to discuss challenges, concerns, and solutions, and encourage peer support by creating a cooperative team environment.
- Be aware of employees who may require additional support during this time. Provide information to staff regarding access to



mental health counseling (such as through the state of Florida's EAP).

Those not in managerial positions can still engage their communities by:

- Reaching out and offering support to others who may be feeling distress, anxiety, and grief during the pandemic.
- Retaining contact with coworkers and other members of the community who might be isolated.

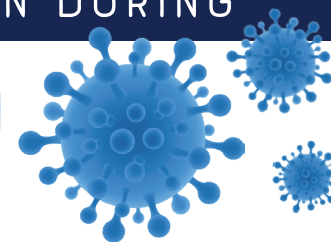
Other resources published by the World Health Organization as part of their #HealthyAtHome campaign:

Connecting the world to combat coronavirus: www.who.int/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/healthyathome

My Hero is You. How kids can fight COVID-19 – storybook for 6-11 year-olds: www.who.int/news-room/detail/09-04-2020-children-s-story-book-released-to-help-children-and-young-people-cope-with-covid-19



HURRICANE PREPARATION DURING COVID-19



This year's Atlantic hurricane season, in true 2020 fashion, has already issued an extraordinary number of storms, being the first season on record to give us nine tropical storms before August, and thirteen before September, including several hurricanes. With the COVID-19 pandemic putting a strain on hospitals, interrupting supply chains, and restricting travel, Florida could be facing a double-disaster scenario, making preparation, evacuation, and recovery extra challenging this year.

Anyone who has lived in Florida through even a few summers is familiar with the typical preparation advice and has a plan in place; however, many plans will need to be revised as COVID-19 causes us to shift emergency strategies. Here are some ways you can prepare for the worst:

HAVE A PLAN AND A BACKUP PLAN:

You'll need multiple options because you don't know which ones will be disrupted by an outbreak of the virus. The pandemic may end up limiting space in shelters and taking up motel capacity. Plan A should be hunkering down at home (unless you are in an evacuation zone), and have a safe place to go should you need to leave,

as close to home as possible. Avoid shelters if you can help it, both to save space for those who truly need it, and to protect yourself and others from illness. If you are able to ride out the storm at home, are isolating and in good health, and have extra room, consider letting other family or friends hunker down with you. If you must go to a community or group shelter, remember to follow the latest guide-lines from the CDC.

GIVE YOURSELF MORE TIME: Don't wait until a storm is looming — this year it is especially important to be prepared in advance. Have your disaster supplies delivered to your home, or shop in-person during off hours so that the stores will be less crowded. Sign up for mail order delivery of prescriptions, or call it in ahead of time and use drive-thru windows or curbside pickup.

UPDATE YOUR HURRICANE SUPPLY

KIT: Visit www.ready.gov/kit for advice on building your disaster kit. This year, the CDC has recommended people include additional items to help prevent the spread of illnesses like COVID-19 and the flu, such as cloth face coverings, soap, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting wipes.

LAPTOP ERGONOMICS



AVOID tight elbow angle



AVOID wrist bent upward



AVOID pressure on elbow or wrist

SIMPLE LAPTOP ERGONOMIC SETUP



BAD

This man's home workstation is the wrong height for his chair, making his elbows too high. His keyboard is too far away so that his arms are stretched and resting on the table. His screen is too low, making him hunch his shoulders, putting strain on his back.



GOOD

Here he is using a keyboard that is separate from his screen, and he has improvised a monitor stand out of boxes (a good solution until someone wants some apple juice!). He is able to sit at the right height and upright in his chair with the aid of cushions on his seat and backrest.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many people suddenly found themselves working from home on laptops, away from their ergonomically-designed workstations with desktop computers, which may result in an increase in work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) such as carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis, as well as headaches and back pain. But you don't need a special "ergonomic" desk or chair to create an ergonomically-correct work-station at home. Here are some tips on how to make working on a laptop more comfortable and with a decreased risk of injury:

Put the laptop on a desk. Yes, it's called a laptop, but actually putting it in your lap causes strain to the neck, shoulders, and back. An actual desk is your best solution, preferably one with a keyboard tray. You can improvise a work surface using a dining table, folding table, or tv tray, as long as the surface is the proper height to allow your elbows to be aligned with the keyboard and your feet to rest flat on the floor. Use a stand to raise the laptop to the right height, or improvise a stand using boxes, stacks of books, etc.

Use a sturdy, supportive chair. An office chair with lower back support allows the spine to stay in a neutral position. If you are using another type of chair with a straight back, try placing a small pillow or rolled up towel in the small of your back. Adjust the chair to the proper height to allow for a neutral posture at the desk. Use a footrest, a box, or a stack of books if necessary so that your feet rest comfortably with your knees aligned with your hips.

Work with proper posture. Sit with your back straight, neck aligned with your spine, looking straight ahead (not thrust forward or tilted back). Shoulders should be relaxed, not hunched or rounded. Elbows should be close to the body (not extended) and at an angle between 90° and 120°. Hands and wrists should be straight, not bent or curved upward.

Find the right balance. Unfortunately, the attached screen and keyboard of the laptop forces users into awkward postures. If possible, use an external monitor and/or keyboard to achieve the proper height for both at the same time. Otherwise, a laptop stand or other object used as a riser, such as a binder or a lap board, can be a good compromise to get the laptop closer to a neutral position.

Face the window. If you are seated in a room with a window, be sure your desk faces the window to avoid glare on your monitor, which can cause eye strain. Another advantage to facing a window is that it gives your eyes something in the distance on which to focus during screen breaks (see the 20-20-20 rule below).

Take frequent breaks. At least once an hour, get up from your desk and walk around. Try doing some simple stretches ([click here for examples](#)). Use the 20-20-20 rule to avoid eye strain — every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break to focus your eyes on something at least 20 feet away. Not only can taking breaks ease the pain of sitting all day, but it can also boost productivity.

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, work-related musculoskeletal disorders top the list of most frequently reported causes of lost or restricted work time, accounting for around 30% of all workers' compensation costs.



WEBINAR

An email blast will be sent from the State Loss Prevention Program prior to each of these webinars with registration information.

UPCOMING TRAINING WEBINARS:

10/7

HOW TO GET THE MOST VALUE OUT OF YOUR SAFETY COMMITTEE

10/21

FACILITY & EQUIPMENT INSPECTIONS

11/4

WORKERS' COMPENSATION & RETURN-TO-WORK

12/2

PROMOTING EMPLOYEE SAFETY AWARENESS

12/16

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS

All webinars will be offered on each date through GoToMeeting at both 10:00 am and 2:00 pm (Eastern Time).

For questions, contact Juana Powell in the Division of Risk Management / Loss Prevention:
Juana.Powell@myfloridacfo.com

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State Loss Prevention Program

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