

## Dealing With Stress: Healthy Habits and Resources

Feeling anxious or showing signs of stress is common during stressful times, such as an infectious outbreak like COVID-19. Recognize signs of stress, encourage healthy habits and stress-relief methods, and use appropriate resources when help is needed.<sup>1</sup> Start with the methods below. **See the chart on the second page for additional resources, especially when a higher-level intervention may be needed.** Call 911 in an emergency or if someone appears to be in crisis.

| Identify Signs of Stress <sup>1</sup>  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Behaviors  | Body   | Feelings   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes in energy or activity level (increase or decrease)</li> <li>• decreased ability to experience pleasure or have fun</li> <li>• increase in alcohol, tobacco use</li> <li>• drug misuse (e.g., opioids, benzos, illicit drugs)</li> <li>• irritability</li> <li>• frequent crying or excessive worrying</li> <li>• difficulty concentrating, relaxing, or sleeping</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gastrointestinal (e.g., stomachache, diarrhea)</li> <li>• pain (e.g., headaches, joints)</li> <li>• tremors or muscle twitches</li> <li>• chills and/or sweating</li> <li>• loss of appetite or excessive eating</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• anxious or fearful</li> <li>• depressed</li> <li>• guilty</li> <li>• angry</li> <li>• heroic, euphoric, or invulnerable</li> <li>• not caring about anything</li> <li>• overwhelmed by sadness</li> </ul> |

### ***Encourage Healthy Ways to Relieve Stress***

- Stay up to date on what is going on in the world, but avoid over exposure to the news.<sup>1</sup>
- Use reputable sources for information (e.g., national organizations, government resources).<sup>1</sup>
- Stay connected with friends and family.<sup>1</sup> Consider these options when face-to-face visits are not possible: phone calls, video chats, text messages, etc.
- Get plenty of sleep and practice a healthy lifestyle:<sup>1</sup>
  - eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water
  - limit alcohol and caffeine intake
  - avoid tobacco and illegal drugs
  - exercise regularly (e.g., walking, running, biking, online fitness classes)
- Practice relaxation<sup>1</sup> (e.g., reading, listening to music, meditation, mindfulness apps [see below]).
- Consider use of apps and other online support options (see examples below).

### ***Examples of Relaxation or Mindfulness Apps*** (available for download on Android and iOS)

- **CBT-I Coach:** helps with anxiety and insomnia
- **Moodpath:** helps with depression and/or anxiety
- **Mindfulness Coach:** learn mindfulness and meditation skills to help with depression and anxiety
- **PTSD Coach:** helps address trauma
- **Mindshift:** helps teens and young adults who have depression or anxiety

### ***Examples of Online Support Options***

- **Health Unlocked** (<https://healthunlocked.com/anxiety-depression-support/about/>): online anxiety and depression support group through the Anxiety and Depression Association of America.
- **Mood Disorders Society of Canada Forum** (<http://www.mdsc.ca/forum/>): online forums for a variety of topics including general mood disorders, bipolar disorder, depression, addiction, etc.

***See the next page for more resources, websites, phone numbers, text lines, etc.***

*More . . .*

| <b>Examples of Available Resources</b>                             |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Organization</b>  | <b>Website/Phone number/Text info</b>   | <b>Other information</b>  |
| Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://store.samhsa.gov/">http://store.samhsa.gov/</a></li> <li>• National Helpline: 800-662-4357</li> <li>• Disaster Distress: 800-985-5990</li> <li>• Text “talkwithus” (English) or “hablanos” (Spanish) to 66746</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAMHSA treatment locator: <a href="https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/">https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/</a></li> <li>• SAMHSA link to “psychological first aid:” <a href="https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Psychological-First-Aid-for-First-Responders/NMH05-0210">https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Psychological-First-Aid-for-First-Responders/NMH05-0210</a></li> </ul>  |
| National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.nami.org/home">https://www.nami.org/home</a></li> <li>• 800-950-6264</li> <li>• Text “nami” to 741741</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers free, peer-led support group for adults with symptoms of a mental health condition: <a href="https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/Support-Groups/NAMI-Connection">https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/Support-Groups/NAMI-Connection</a>.</li> <li>• Warmline (peer run support line) directory: <a href="https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/BlogImageArchive/2020/NAMI-National-HelpLine-WarmLine-Directory-3-11-20.pdf">https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/BlogImageArchive/2020/NAMI-National-HelpLine-WarmLine-Directory-3-11-20.pdf</a>.</li> </ul> |
| National Suicide Prevention  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/">https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/</a></li> <li>• 800-273-8255 (English)</li> <li>• 888-628-9454 (Spanish)</li> </ul>   |   |
| National Domestic Violence Hotline                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.thehotline.org/">https://www.thehotline.org/</a></li> <li>• 800-799-7233</li> <li>• Text “loveis” to 22522</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive guide to safety planning: <a href="https://www.loveisrespect.org/for-yourself/safety-planning/interactive-safety-plan/">https://www.loveisrespect.org/for-yourself/safety-planning/interactive-safety-plan/</a></li> </ul>   |
| Crisis Text Line   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.crisistextline.org/">https://www.crisistextline.org/</a></li> <li>• Text “home” to 741741 (U.S. and Canada)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can also be accessed via Facebook Messenger</li> </ul>   |
| Canadian Mental Health Association and Crisis Services Canada      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://cmha.ca/news/covid-19-and-mental-health">https://cmha.ca/news/covid-19-and-mental-health</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.crisisservicescanada.ca/en/">https://www.crisisservicescanada.ca/en/</a></li> <li>• 833-456-4566 (866-277-3553 in QC)</li> <li>• Text “start” or “CSPS” to 45645 (available 4 pm to midnight EST)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text support is only available in English (not French).</li> <li>• Offers a peer support training program (<a href="https://peersupportcanada.ca/">https://peersupportcanada.ca/</a>).</li> <li>• Offers tips to respond to employee anxiety (<a href="https://cmha.ca/news/6-tips-to-respond-to-employee-anxiety-about-covid-19">https://cmha.ca/news/6-tips-to-respond-to-employee-anxiety-about-covid-19</a>)</li> </ul>  |
| Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.ccsa.ca/">https://www.ccsa.ca/</a></li> <li>• 833-235-4048</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sheet outlining potential risks from alcohol and cannabis use during the COVID-19 pandemic: <a href="https://www.ccsa.ca/covid-19-alcohol-and-cannabis-use-infographic">https://www.ccsa.ca/covid-19-alcohol-and-cannabis-use-infographic</a></li> </ul>   |
| Mental Health First Aid  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/">https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/</a></li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers skills-based training on mental health and substance-use issues.</li> <li>• Access resources (e.g., general mental health, anxiety, depression, substance use) at <a href="https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/mental-health-resources/">https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/mental-health-resources/</a>.</li> </ul>   |

*Users of this resource are cautioned to use their own professional judgment and consult any other necessary or appropriate sources prior to making clinical judgments based on the content of this document. Our editors have researched the information with input from experts, government agencies, and national organizations. Information and internet links in this article were current as of the date of publication.*

*More . . .*

**Project Leader in preparation of this clinical resource (360503):** Beth Bryant, Pharm.D., BCPS, Assistant Editor

### References

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Coping with stress during infectious disease outbreaks. 2014. <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Coping-with-Stress-During-Infectious-Disease-Outbreaks/sma14-4885>. (Accessed April 15, 2020).

**Cite this document as follows:** Clinical Resource, *Dealing With Stress: Healthy Habits and Resources. Pharmacist's Letter/Prescriber's Letter*. May 2020.

trc  | pharmacist's letter™

*Evidence and Recommendations You Can Trust...*

trc  | prescriber's letter™

trc  | pharmacy technician's letter™

3120 West March Lane, Stockton, CA 95219 ~ TEL (209) 472-2240 ~ FAX (209) 472-2249  
Copyright © 2020 by Therapeutic Research Center

Subscribers to the *Letter* can get clinical resources, like this one, on any topic covered in any issue by going to [pharmacist.therapeuticresearch.com](http://pharmacist.therapeuticresearch.com) ~ [prescriber.therapeuticresearch.com](http://prescriber.therapeuticresearch.com) ~ [pharmacytech.therapeuticresearch.com](http://pharmacytech.therapeuticresearch.com)