



TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION HEALTH CARE



For Immediate Release

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TONHC: 2020-COVID-19

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Tohono O'odham Nation Health Care (TONHC) – Stress Management During COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is normal to experience mood changes or increased levels of stress and anxiety. If you are experiencing persistent changes in mood or anxiety levels, it is important that you reach out to people who can help. There is no shame in asking for help, and doing so will decrease the likelihood of developing more serious mental health issues.

If you or someone you know is expressing thoughts of suicide or harm, please contact **24-Hour Tohono O'odham Nation Dedicated Crisis Line: 1-844-423-8759.**

Common reactions to COVID-19

- **Concern about protecting oneself** from the virus because you are at higher risk of serious illness.
- **Concern that regular medical care or community services may be disrupted** due to facility closures or reductions in services
- **Feeling socially isolated**, especially if you live alone or are in a community setting that is not allowing visitors because of the pandemic.
- **Guilt** if loved ones help you with activities of daily living.
- **Increased levels of distress** if you:
 - Have mental health concerns before the outbreak, such as depression.
 - Live in lower-income households or have language barriers.
 - Experience stigma because of age, race or ethnicity, disability, or perceived likelihood of spreading COVID-19

Please reach out for help at any time but especially if you are noticing:

- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Irregular appetite (eating too much or too little)
- Frequent mood swings
- Difficulty concentrating/memory problems
- Trouble stopping worry
- Using substances to deal with feelings such as alcohol or drugs



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It is also important that you are aware, that there are stress management techniques that are likely to help to keep your stress at manageable levels.

Below you will find a list of stress management tips, and resources for assistance when you or a loved one are experiencing some of these feelings.

Check in with your loved ones often. Virtual communication can help you and your loved ones feel less lonely and isolated. Consider connecting with loved ones by:

- Telephone
- Email
- Mailing letters or cards
- Text messages
- Video chat
- Social media
- For families with children take the time to discuss COVID-19 and Safety Guidelines to open up communication and make sure that they understand what is going on

Help keep your loved ones safe.

- **Know what medications your loved one is taking.** Help your loved ones refill their medications in a timely manner to avoid gaps in prescription therapy.
- **Monitor other medical supplies** (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) needed and create a back-up plan.
- **Stock up on non-perishable food** (canned foods, dried beans, pasta) to have on hand in your home to minimize trips to stores.
- **If you care for a loved one living in a care facility,** monitor the situation and speak with facility administrators or staff over the phone. Ask about the health of the other residents frequently and know the protocol if there is an outbreak.

Take care of your own emotional health. Caring for a loved one can take an emotional toll, especially during an outbreak like COVID-19. There are ways to support yourself.

- Talk to someone: family member, friend, or professional mental health provider
 - Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746
 - Crisis Line-Text: Text “Hello” to 741-741
- Take time for your needs:
 - Take a walk
 - Start a new activity or hobby
 - Gardening (indoors, outdoors, both!)



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- Reading
- Organizing and going through photos
- Put together a puzzle, board games
- Word searches
- Journaling/Writing
- Trying a new recipe
- Stretching, walking, making weights out of old milk jugs filled with dirt, physical exercise is very important for overall health and has a large effect on your mood
- Hobbies or activities you used to do that you enjoyed, perhaps playing an instrument, crafting, beading
- Taking a couple deep breaths and imagining a positive memory or place that helps you smile or relax
- Making sure that you are not watching or listening to the news all day long. News often focuses on negative stories, which makes it more difficult for people to keep positive thoughts in our own minds. This can impact your sleep or make you feel worried more often than you need to.
- Stick to a routine, this will help you feel more so like it's a typical day, wake up and go to sleep as you normally would, eat your meals at their normal times
- Watch or listen to motivating videos, songs, or if your church is offering virtual bible study or sermons make sure to tune in as you normally would

Stay home if you are sick. Do not visit family or friends who are at greater risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Use virtual communication to keep in touch to support your loved one and keep them safe.

Hotlines for COVID-19 have been set up to answer any general questions the public may have:

State Hotline available 24 hours, 7 days a week: 1-800-542-8201 (Poison and Drug Information)