

Maintaining Mental Health and Wellness During the COVID-19 outbreak



We are all impacted by Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the feelings of fear and uncertainty these circumstances can bring. For individuals within the refugee community, trauma from past experiences may add further stress and anxiety. This guide provides recommendations for self-care, signs of distress, and resources to cope.

Recommendations for self-care:

- Take care of your body. Maintain routines related to meals, exercise, and bedtime.
 - Try to eat healthy meals.
 - Plan physical activities that can be done at home.
 - Get plenty of sleep. Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs as they will disrupt sleep.
- Engage in relaxation techniques to reduce stress, such as following guided meditations available online.
- Practice patience and tolerance to model healthy habits for your friends and family.
- Connect with others safely. Plan activities with those in your home or virtually with others. Check-in with family or friends who are elderly or ill.
- Take breaks and make time to relax. Try to do activities you usually enjoy.
- If it is part of your routine, consider attending religious services online.
- Stay informed, but avoid too much exposure to the news. Be aware that rumors may spread during a crisis. Always check your sources and turn to reliable sources of information. The County of San Diego has information available at www.coronavirus-sd.com.

If you are experiencing signs of distress, please ensure you are practicing the self-care activities listed above.

Common signs of distress:

- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety, or fear
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Anger or short-temper
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

Seek help when needed. If distress impacts your daily life for several days or weeks, talk to a counselor, doctor, or faith leader. The County has numerous programs available to support mental health and wellness, including programs specific to the refugee community. In addition, *The Refugee Response* has posted a video on YouTube with tips on managing stress and anxiety during COVID-19, available in 21 languages:

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLOZioxrlwCv00QHKgJWFWMwFjz2f9AmpK

To get connected with a program or for immediate crisis support in over 150 languages, call the **San Diego Access and Crisis Line (888-724-7240)**, see box below for more information. If you're experiencing stress or anxiety related to COVID-19, call the **Optum Emotional Support Help Line (866-342-6892)** for toll-free, 24/7 support with translation services available.

San Diego Access and Crisis Line: Support in 150+ Languages

The **San Diego Access and Crisis Line (888-724-7240)** offers immediate support and behavioral health resources from an experienced counselor 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Services are confidential, free of charge, and available in 150 languages via an interpreter service.