

As we continue to develop plans and procedures in response to the changing health and safety measures suggested by our governing bodies, we also want to be aware of the impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic on mental health & wellness. It is paramount that we take opportunities to assess and address our own mental well-being in this time of uncertainty and rapid change.

We at ONMB are certainly not experts and are personally working at this daily but we strongly encourage you to engage in routine self-care practices, and to seek professional help if the need arises.

We gathered some resources from our CCMBC HR office and want to provide you with the following information regarding the upkeep of mental wellness and self-care practices. We encourage you to reach out to us for more assistance. We want to be a source of care and support during this time.

Taking Care of Yourself – Common reactions and suggestions for coping

News reports and discussions with family and friends about Coronavirus (COVID-19) may bring about some strong emotional or physical reactions. It is very common, in fact quite normal, for individuals to experience waves of emotions during stressful events or uncertain times. Some of these “symptoms “may include:

- Uncertainty/fear
- Anxious/overwhelmed
- Difficulty concentrating
- Emotional outbursts
- Hyper alert to environment
- Restlessness/agitation
- Appetite changes
- Sleep disturbances
- Headaches
- Nausea/stomach issues

These responses are very natural reactions to stressful times. Everyone is unique in their response because of personal history, beliefs, outlook, support system, health status and coping strategies.

Helpful Suggestions for You to Try:

- Talk about what you are hearing how it impacts you to people you trust when you are ready.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. This may sound silly, but we often forget to hydrate when we are stressed or feeling anxious. Dehydration can make those feelings worse.
- Eat well-balanced meals throughout the day.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Practice deep breathing exercises to calm yourself and try to relax. Check out apps like Calm or Headspace.
- Consider taking a break from watching the news or accessing social media sites to shield yourself from the constant barrage of information.
- Try to focus on what you can control like proper hand-hygiene, preparing emergency supplies, etc.
- It's natural to think about the "what if..., could of..., should of..." thoughts. However, these thoughts will not help you. Focus on positive outcomes and facts.
- To manage reoccurring, stressful thoughts, simply acknowledge the thought and try to imagine holding a remote control in your hand and changing the channel by shifting your focus on a joy-filled moment or peaceful place. You may also want to consider saying a repetitive, positive statement out loud.
- Incorporate self-care and joy into each day –read a book, play with your kids or pet, listen to your favorite music, or watch a funny movie.
- Try to maintain your daily routines and structure your time. You will likely find that maintaining your routine will help gain back a sense of control and order in your life.
- Engage in physical activity (exercise), alternated with relaxation. It will help to alleviate some of the anxious "energy" you may be feeling.
- Sometimes, when our thoughts become overwhelming, professional assistance from a counselor may be necessary.

Helpful Suggestions for Family and Friends:

- Listen carefully. When others talk about their experiences and feelings, their emotional load seems lighter to bear. One of the best ways you can help is to just listen. You don't have to come up with solutions or answers. It's okay if someone breaks down and cries.
- Spend time being "present"; presence is more important than words.
- Be understanding. Your perceptions and reactions to an incident may be very different from others based upon past experiences, beliefs, and coping skills. Recognize that everyone has their own unique response. Do not judge or impose your response or coping strategies on to others.

- Accept feelings. A wide range of emotions may be felt such as fear, anger, sadness and guilt. These emotions may be strong and change from moment to moment. If directed at you don't take them personally. Allow free expression without judgment or critique.
- Respect their need for balance in being together and personal time.
- Be careful not to promote gossip or rumors. A lot of information is being shared, be sensitive and respectful to all parties. Don't make assumptions or "fill in the gaps" with information that may not be accurate. Direct questions to the appropriate parties.
- Respect differences. Everyone responds and copes differently to traumatic situations. Some will reach out, while others will be more private and introspective. Show respect by giving each person what they need. If you don't know, ask. Be careful not to impose your own coping strategies onto someone else.
- Respect privacy and confidentiality. If someone shares information, be courteous and do not repeat what is shared. The only time confidences should be broken is when someone is at risk of harming themselves or others. Provide a safe, secure area to ensure privacy.
- Ask to lend a helping hand. By nature, people will not ask for help or may not know what to ask for; take the lead and offer a helpful hand. Suggestions may be sharing their workload, taking a walk or going out to lunch. Even small things like cleaning, preparing meals, running errands and caring for family members can be a huge help.
- Be supportive and sensitive –Simple statements like "I care about you" and "I'm here for you" demonstrate care and concern. Remember, you may not know all the circumstances of the event, their past experiences or current situation. Multiple stressors may exist. Provide positive and encouraging words to give strength and hope.

Self-Care Resources:

Take '5' – BE LOVED - Breathe In & Breathe Out

- In this time when there is crisis all around us, live out of the PEACE that Jesus brings into the world

Posture Prayer – Danielle Strickland

- Infinitum is a practice for those who **follow** Jesus and choose to live lives of **love**. It's not about joining something, it's about having tools and rhythms to **live** this out in your context and your community.
- infinitemlife.com
- [Infinitum Life // Guided Posture Prayer - Podcast](#)
- [Daily Prayer](#)

ONMB Wellness Tracker Tool – [link here](#)

- use this personally or with your team
- we can help you personalize this to suit your needs

Multiply

- Multiply is offering an interactive on-line training program called *Living on Mission - in Times of Crisis*
- Starts April 20, 2020 – visit www.multiply.net/livingonmission

Soul Care Conference – LIVESTREAM

- April 23-25, 2020 – [click here for more details](#)