



Mental Health Updates from EMCC's Counseling & Advising Staff

During these difficult times, EMCC is doing everything possible for faculty, staff, and student safety. These are new and developing times for everyone and can bring about new fear and anxiety as people frequently respond to uncertainty and change with increased worry and stress.

EMCC's counseling and advising staff want to remind everyone to take care of yourself during these times. Maintaining self-care is vital during periods of increased stress. Take care of yourself daily in some way. Rest, sleep, hydration, diet, exercise are always the foundation of these routines. Psychological self-care is important as well. Talk to coworkers, friends, and family, and utilize spiritual resources. Find creative ways to maintain connections with others. The following information is a resource to help us weather the unfamiliar path in a healthy way.

Responding to Stress During Difficult Times

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for many people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause a wide range of thoughts, reactions, and emotions.

Common Reactions:

- Anxiety, worry
- Feelings of helplessness
- Social withdrawal



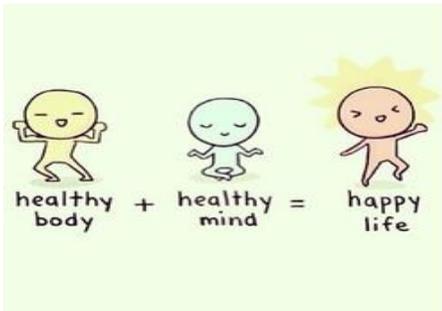
- Tearfulness
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating and sleeping
- Anger
- Race/Identity related stress

Tips to Manage Our Responses:

While it is important to stay informed, there are also many things we can do to support and manage our wellbeing during such times.

- **Get the facts.** Stay informed with the latest health information from reputable sources.
- **Keep things in perspective.** Limit worry and agitation by decreasing your COVID-19 information intake. Although you should get the facts and stay informed, remember to take a break from social media and other information sources.

- **Practice gratitude.** Focus on the positive in your life or things you have control over. Create a “gratitude list” or journal to flip your focus from negativity to positive experiences. Send thank you notes to people who have been an influence on your life.
- **Keep a routine.** Get up in the morning and go to bed at night at the same time each day. The average adult needs seven to eight hours of sleep per night; children and adolescents typically require nine to 12 hours. Plan activities during your day to focus on including things like reading, creativity, connecting with others, and working. Even if you don’t maintain a strict schedule, routine helps organize your day so that you know what to expect regularly.



• **Practice relaxation and spirituality.** Activities such as yoga, deep breathing, and meditation can be calming when stress is at its highest. While it doesn’t remove the stress, these activities help relax our brains and bodies so we can more effectively cope with events around us. Connecting to spiritual resources through online streaming or other avenues like Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime allow us to stay in touch with others who share our beliefs in a way that will be safe for all ages and health histories.

- **Stay Healthy.** Adopt healthy hygienic habits: wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer frequently; cover your mouth with your arm if you sneeze or cough instead of your hands; and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Maintain a healthy way of eating. Get exercise even if it’s just a short walk and some fresh air near your home. Stay hydrated. Maintain any medications prescribed by your physician. Limit alcohol or other substance use.

- **Seek Help.** If your anxiety or worry is feeling overwhelming, see additional help from mental health professionals in your area. Sometimes we need someone to help us evaluate our perspectives without fear of judgement or coercion.

SEEKING SUPPORT?

If you are looking for continued care in your area, the following resources are available:

- Visit [Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com/)
- Contact your insurance provider about behavioral health benefits
- Contact your Community Mental Health Services:
 - Community Counseling Services (Clay, Lowndes, Noxubee, & Oktibbeha counties) <http://www.ccsms.org/>
CCS 24-hour Crisis Hotline (888) 943-3022
 - Weems Mental Health (Kemper & Lauderdale counties) <http://www.weemsmh.com/default/>
Weems 24-hour Crisis Hotline (800) 803-0245
 - RightTrack Medical Group (662) 234-7601: <https://www.righttrackmedical.com/>
 - Starkville Counseling Associates – (662) 323-5588: <http://starkvillecounseling.com/>
 - Christian Changes Counseling and Recovery Center – (662) 338-1880: <https://www.christianchanges.com/>



- Meek Counseling Services – (662) 329-1444
- Baptist Behavioral Health Care – (662) 244-2560
- Try TeleHealth Services
 - Amwell TeleHealth Services
<https://amwell.com/landing.htm>
 - Better Help TeleCounseling Services
<https://www.betterhelp.com/>



If you are experiencing a mental health emergency:

- Call 911 or visit a local emergency room
- Contact the [National Suicide Hotline](#) 1-800-273-8255 or text CONNECT to **741741**
- If the emergency is related to COVID-19 stress, contact the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#), 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746

Additional reading and resources:



Please see link below to the MSU Extension Coronavirus webpage. A link to some helpful videos are posted in the middle of this page.

<http://extension.msstate.edu/food-and-health/health/coronavirus>

EMCC also has a Coronavirus webpage:

<http://www.eastms.edu/coronavirus/index.html>

“What Therapists Tell Patients Who Are Anxious About Coronavirus”

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/therapists-advice-patients-coronavirus-anxiety_I_5e6fb44ac5b6125e095b4134

“Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak”

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>

“How To Do Deep Breathing”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYQsRBNYdPk>

“How To Do Progressive Muscle Relaxation”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nZEdqcGVzo>

If you have additional questions or concerns, please call (662) 243-1925.