

Take care of yourself, rest and find the balance that works for you

Spotlight

We understand that these uncertain times can result in strong feelings of stress and anxiety. Take care of yourself; rest and find the balance that works for you.

"While we reiterate the importance of taking daily precautions to prevent spread, we want to make sure South Carolinians are also taking steps to address the feelings of stress and anxiety that arise in this type of prolonged situation," said Dr. Jonathan Knoche, DHEC physician. "Our partners at the Department of Mental Health have resources available to help, and we continue to provide guidance for coping with stress on [DHEC's COVID-19 webpage](#)."

In addition to taking precautions to stop the spread of germs, we encourage you to take the following steps to help protect your mental and emotional health:

- **Take breaks** from watching, reading, or listening to news stories and social media. Hearing about COVID-19 or other stress-inducing issues repeatedly can be upsetting.
- **Take care of your body:** eat healthy, well-balanced meals; exercise regularly; get plenty of sleep; and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- **Make time to unwind** and participate in activities you enjoy.
- **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Below includes a list of numbers that our team has pulled together which you may find beneficial for yourself or others.

LOCAL CRISIS LINES:

S.C. Department of Mental Health (DMH) Community Crisis Response and Intervention (CCR) 24/7/365: 1-833-364-2274

DMH Deaf Services Crisis Hotline: 1-800-647-2066

NATIONAL CRISIS LINES:

Mental Health Emergency phone number: 988

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

Visit scdmh.net for stress, anxiety, and mental health resources from DMH. In addition, DHEC continues to provide new and updated guidance about COVID-19 at scdhec.gov/COVID19. You can also reach out to a member of our **Employee Relations** team for immediate assistance and guidance, at **803-898-3394**.

Anyone with concerns about their health should reach out to their healthcare provider or use the telehealth services provided by several health care systems. For telehealth options and the latest information about DHEC's COVID-19 response efforts, please visit scdhec.gov/COVID-19.



Dedicated service dog Ziva is working hard to offer support and a warm embrace during the COVID-19 response efforts.

COVID-19 AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

While we are familiar with viruses like the common cold and the flu, the coronavirus (COVID-19) is new and presents a situation that none of us could have imagined a few short months ago. The fact that it is extremely contagious has resulted in business closures, social distancing, and quarantine measures which have disrupted our daily lives. It is more important now than ever to pay attention to mental health during this time of isolation and uncertainty.

YOUR CONCERNS ARE VALID

There are many reasons that you might be concerned or worried about COVID-19. Some of the most common are:

Getting sick	Passing the virus onto others, especially those that are high-risk	Adjusting to a new reality for an uncertain amount of time	Taking care of and supporting your family
Concern about the health of your friends and family	Financial stress	Not being able to connect with friends and family the way you're used to	Shortages of certain common supplies

REALIZE WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

One of the most frustrating things about COVID-19 is that so much about the virus and the limitations on where you can go are out of your control. However, there are things that you can control, and focusing on those things can provide you with some comfort. Some of the things you can control include:

YOUR MIND AND BODY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a healthy diet • Exercise at home • Get enough sleep • Do not smoke or drink alcohol excessively • Take care of your mental health • Maintain self-care and personal hygiene
YOUR IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your house, your bedroom, your closet, your kitchen – now is the time to clean and get organized • Make responsible choices about when to leave the house and only go out if necessary • Limit the number of people you come into contact with • Work from home if you are able to
WHAT YOU CONSUME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't overspend your news and information intake • Get your information from reliable sources like the CDC or WHO • Watch TV, movies, and videos that make you feel good
HOW YOU PREPARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep 2-4 weeks' food on hand • Avoid overstocking on supplies that are in high demand so other people can take enough of the essentials too • If you take medication, get refills and keep a month's supply at home if possible
HOW YOU PROTECT YOURSELF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly wash your hands for 20 seconds, with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol • Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth • Avoid greeting people by shaking hands, hugging or hugging • Keep 6 feet of distance between you and anyone who is coughing or sneezing
HOW YOU PROTECT OTHERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay home if you are sick aside from getting medical care • Cover your coughs and sneezes • Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces

SIGNS OF ANXIETY

It is normal to be worried and stressed during times of crisis. While worry is a part of anxiety, people with anxiety tend to experience more exaggerated feelings of worry and tension. Some common symptoms include:

Uncontrollable worry or dread	Stomach and digestion problems	Trouble with concentration, memory or thinking clearly	Increased heart rate	Changes in energy and difficulty sleeping	Irritability and/or restlessness
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In extreme cases of anxiety, people may experience a panic attack. Panic attacks are often mistaken for heart attacks at first, but usually go away when people are able to talk to someone else to calm their fears and practice deep breathing.

MANAGING ANXIETY

There are small things that everyone can do while practicing social distancing or self-quarantine to help reduce the amount of anxiety they are experiencing.

Ask someone to be your support buddy, call, text, or video chat as needed.	Exercise at home	Use resources like online support groups or the Crisis Text Line (Text Talk to 741741)	Set boundaries with your phone.
Use a mindfulness or meditation app.	Set a timer for every hour to get up and stretch or take a walk.	Create a new routine.	Take 10 deep breaths when you feel stressed.

WHEN ANXIETY WON'T LET UP

If you're taking steps to manage worry and anxiety during the COVID-19 crisis but they don't seem to be helping, there are additional resources you can take advantage of:

<p>Mental Health Screening</p> <p>If you feel like you are struggling with your mental health, visit mhscreening.org to check your symptoms.</p> <p>It's free, private, and anonymous. Once you have your results, MHA will give you information and resources to help you start to feel better.</p>	<p>Crisis Hotlines and Textlines</p> <p>If you are experiencing emotional distress related to the COVID-19 pandemic, crisis counselors are available 24/7, 365 days a year.</p> <p>Call 1-800-985-5990 or text "TALKWITHUS" to 64646.</p> <p>If you are in crisis or on thinking about suicide, get connected to a local crisis center and get in touch with someone immediately.</p> <p>Call 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) or text "MHA" to 741741.</p>
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Find more information and resources about COVID-19 and mental health at mhanational.org/covid19.

MHA Mental Health America **B4Stage4**

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