

Mental Health during COVID-19



It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during and after a stressful situation.

Everyone reacts differently, and your own feelings will change over time. Notice and accept how you feel. Self-care during a stressful situation will help your long-term healing. Taking care of your emotional health will help you think clearly and protect yourself and your loved ones.

Coping with Self-Isolation

While physical distancing helps slow the spread of COVID-19, the effects of isolation can negatively impact our mental health. Now more than ever, it is essential for all New Brunswickers to emotionally support each other while abiding by the distancing measures recommended by public health.

Self-isolation can at times be needed to prevent the spread of a virus in a community. Unfortunately, this can worsen feelings of loneliness or abandonment. People placed in self-isolation may experience a wide range of feelings, including relief, fear, anger, sadness, irritability, guilt or confusion. They may find it hard to sleep. Humans are social creatures and need connection to others to thrive, which can make isolation challenging. Other sources of stress can include loss of income for those who are not able to work when they are in self-isolation, displacement due to the need to find a place to safely self-isolate away from others, difficulty making arrangements for coverage of household and caregiver duties, and difficulty accessing needed services/supplies.

Dealing with isolation

The following suggestions may help you through this challenging time:

Keep busy

- Create and stick to a schedule for work, leisure, chores, meals, physical activity and sleep.
- Explore if your employer will allow you to work from home and attend meetings via teleconference or videoconference.
- If you cannot work, use this time to catch up on other tasks or projects at home.
- Do things that you normally love to do (e.g., crosswords, puzzles, reading, TV shows, listening to music).

Stay Connected

- Think of ways to stay connected to other people – by videoconference, phone, chat or text.
- Talk to others and share how you are feeling.
- Ask for help when you're feeling overwhelmed.

Take Care of Yourself

- As much as is possible, prepare healthy meals and drink lots of water.
- Stay physically active: go online to find exercises you can do at home with no equipment.
- Practise relaxation or meditation.
- Visit www.gnb.ca/coronavirus to find more helpful tips and resources for coping during this stressful time.

Prepare ahead

- Plan ahead with family or friends to get additional food and supplies if you have to self-isolate.
- Use delivery services to order supplies where available in your community.

- Ask your pharmacy if they can deliver medications you need or plan ahead to make sure you have enough medication to last through your self-isolation. If you take opioids to treat either chronic pain or addiction, make sure that the pharmacist and prescriber are available to ensure an uninterrupted supply of your medication.
- Keep a list of important numbers, including your doctor, public health, pharmacy and hospital.
- Create a list of community organizations that can provide support and resources if needed.

Supporting a loved one

Here is how you can support a loved one:

- Keep lines of communication open and talk regularly - through video chat, phone calls, messaging apps or text messages.
- Be a good listener.
- Ask about their general health, food they might need, tasks that need to be done and other ways you might help them.
- Help them stay distracted with work, hobbies, music, movies and other activities.
- Help them structure the day and encourage them to limit the amount of news they consume.
- If they have a pre-existing mental illness, make sure they have access to their medications and that their condition is not getting worse.
- Connect them to their health care provider or any reliable and validated online support service.

Reaching out for help is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength.

If you feel that the stress or anxiety you experience as a result of COVID-19 is getting to be too much, there are options available to you:

[CHIMO Helpline](#) - Help is just a phone call away: 1-800-667-5005

[Hope for Wellness Helpline](#) - The Hope for Wellness Helpline offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention to all Indigenous people across Canada: 1-855-242-3310

[Kids Help Phone](#) - Text TALK to 686868 or call 1-800-668-6868 to chat with a volunteer Crisis Responder 24/7.

If you experience stress reactions in response to the COVID-19 outbreak for several days in a row and are unable to carry out normal responsibilities because of them, contact your health care provider or your [local addictions and mental health centre](#).