

Caring for Your Emotional Health During COVID-19

While we're hearing a lot about proactive and preventive measures we can take to protect our physical health, what about our mental and emotional wellness? Because we're being constantly updated with COVID-19 news, anxiety, panic, and feelings of helplessness and hopelessness may occur. Here are some tips from Holland Hospital Behavioral Health Services you can use to care for your mental and emotional health:

- **Check the facts.** Find reputable sources of information (Health Department, Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], World Health Organization [WHO], health care organizations) to stay informed. Try to avoid biased sources of information, as they are likely to increase feelings of anxiety.
- **Get back to the basics.** This means eating well, getting enough sleep, exercising regularly and drinking plenty of water. All of these habits are good for your physical and mental health.
- **Give yourself a break from the news and talking about coronavirus.** Distract yourself with another activity. Choose something that can capture your full attention, and focus on it completely for a set period of time.
- **Breathe.** When you find yourself feeling anxious, panicked or overwhelmed, stop and focus on your breathing. Count slow to seven as you inhale and to seven again as you exhale.
- **Stay connected.** With the cancellation of many social gatherings and events, it's easy to feel alone and isolated. Make an intentional effort to connect with your support system through calling, texting and videos.
- **Practice mindfulness.** Check out apps like Headspace ([headspace.com](https://www.headspace.com)) or Calm ([calm.com/calmhealthtrial](https://www.calm.com/calmhealthtrial)), which both offer free trials. Just a few minutes can make a meaningful difference.
- **Follow structure and routine.** Map out a plan for your day and week. Get dressed and ready each day, even if you're staying at home.