



## Managing Stress and When to Ask for Help

*Rachel Pearson, MSW, LMSW*

These are challenging times. No doubt about that. With routines upended and lots of unknowns, it can be hard to manage stress and emotions. There is nothing wrong with that. It is perfectly normal, and you are not alone. Everyone experiences stress differently and sometimes it can be hard to assess everything we've lost in our normal day-to-day interactions.

Making time for personal connections can help. If you are working from home now, spend time chatting with co-workers at the beginning or ending of meetings. Schedule some time to talk with friends or set up virtual play dates for your kids. Staying connected with others during this time of separation can be helpful. If books are a good escape for you, check out your library's website for information on checking out electronic books. As the weather gets nicer, it will be easier to get out for walks or just a breath of fresh air by the front door. Build some time into your routine for yourself, even if it is just a few minutes a day in the shower.

You may find that your methods of coping will need to change over time. This is also normal as we get used to a new way of living. If you are looking for things to do with your kids to help them stay upbeat, click [here](#) for some ideas from Henry Ford LiveWell. The CDC also has some good resources for coping with this time, click [here](#) to read more.

Most importantly, if you are struggling, please reach out for help. The CDC recommends looking out for these common signs of distress:

- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety or fear.
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images.
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Anger or short-temper.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

If you have had any of these feelings or behaviors for several days in a row, or they prevent you from completing normal responsibilities, seek help. If you already have a therapist or psychiatrist, contact them. Most can do video or telephone visits. Your primary care provider or child's pediatrician can also help.

If you are uncertain of what support you need or just want to talk to someone, call Henry Ford's Community Emotional Support Call Line at (313) 874-0343 from 7am-11pm daily. Staffed by behavioral health specialists, this call line is available to adults and teens in the community, even if they get healthcare elsewhere. They can be a great resource for a chat or if you need help getting services for you or your family.