



March 13, 2020

Contact: Chelsea Oliver
Public Relations Coordinator
517.780.3309
Chelsea.Oliver@LifeWaysCMH.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PSA: Managing Your Mental Health During the Coronavirus Outbreak

When people feel uncertain, threatened, out of control, or unsafe their stress levels can rise. Stress is a normal reaction to uncertain situations. When people are stressed it is their bodies way of telling them to prepare for the unknown. This stress reaction is meant to help us, but it can also cause us to feel even more uncertain and anxious if information is unclear and inconsistent.

Currently, the public is concerned about COVID-19, also known as “Coronavirus.” The uncertainty of what is to come is causing more stress and anxiety by the day. You may be wondering how you can prevent further stress or how to find calm in such uncertain times.

During infectious disease outbreaks, our mental health is often affected. Amid such an outbreak, you should monitor your own physical and mental health. Know the signs of stress and try to recognize it in yourself and your loved ones.

Signs that you or a loved one are experiencing stress include being on edge or moodiness. Stress can also make you feel angry, hopeless, or sad. You may have less patience and become easily frustrated. For those who already struggle with mental wellbeing, you may notice symptoms of anxiety or depression becoming more pronounced.

Understanding how to relieve this stress can help. It is important to know that we are not helpless in this situation. Here are some coping mechanisms considering recent events:

- **Realize what you can control:** Washing your hands. Reminding your friends and family to do the same. Limiting how much news you watch. Limiting interactive events.
- **Find what makes you feel safe:** What makes you feel safe could be different from others. Try not to compare yourself to others or feel badly about the decisions you make. You need to do what feels best for **you**.

-more-

- **Go outside:** This doesn't mean go visit crowded streets, but go into nature, get some sunshine and fresh air. Vitamin D naturally boosts your mood and can help to alleviate some of the symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- **Keep yourself healthy:** Be sure to eat healthy foods, drink lots of water, avoid alcohol and caffeine, get enough sleep, and find time for physical activities.
- **Know the facts:** Make sure that you are only looking at reputable resources for your information regarding COVID-19 such as your family doctor, U.S. government agencies, or state/local health departments. www.cdc.gov or www.who.int/en or www.michigan.gov/coronavirus
- **Techniques for relaxation:** Take deep breaths, stretch, meditate, engage in pleasurable activities. If you must do stressful activities, take your time and take breaks. When you do have a free moment, use that time to relax; read a book, listen to music, take a bath, or talk to family member or friend. You may also want to talk about your feelings with your family and friends often.
- **Be aware of your body and emotions:** Try to recognize early signs of stress and prevent it from getting worse. Think about your past uncertain experiences and focus on how you handled those situations.

You are not alone in this! Help is always available. If you are struggling with your mental health, you can contact LifeWays Community Mental Health at 517-798-1200 (Jackson) or 517-439-2641 (Hillsdale).

###

About LifeWays Community Mental Health

LifeWays Community Mental Health provides mental health support, information, and services to residents of Jackson and Hillsdale counties. LifeWays ensures that all county residents who have a severe mental illness, emotional disturbance, intellectual or developmental disability, or substance use disorder receive the services they need to assist them in recovery. For more information, visit LifeWaysCMH.org. Hope and help begin at LifeWays Community Mental Health.

Jackson Location

1200 N West Ave
Jackson, MI 49202

Hillsdale Location

25 Care Dr
Hillsdale, MI 49242