

Guidance for Individuals and Families Relating to the COVID-19 Outbreak

Lessons learned based on our experience providing support services for thousands of families, survivors, and responders since 2001.



The outbreak of COVID-19 has impacted individuals, families and communities globally. Feelings of uncertainty about the spread of the virus has caused fear, anxiety and social isolation. Similar to the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, information and support is critical to build resilience and promote recovery in communities during this turbulent time.

HELPFUL MENTAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Create a “New Normal” for You and Your family

- Establish a daily routine for meals, work, exercise, and sleep
- Adopt a family plan to prevent spreading the disease
- Ensure you and your family members socialize
- Be prepared to have adequate food, supplies and medication on hand
- Be informed about your local community guidelines
- Rely on reputable sources for news updates
- Limit overexposure to news and social media reports
- If you are working from home, set boundaries to separate your work from time dedicated to your family
- Take care of yourself, to better care for your family

Taking Care of Your Mind and Body

- Engage in relaxing activities
- Eat healthy food
- Stay hydrated
- Try to get regular exercise and sleep
- Spend time outdoors and enjoy nature
- Avoid the use of alcohol and drugs or participating in risky behaviors
- Avoid stimulants like caffeine, sugar, or nicotine
- Use spirituality, meditation or relaxation techniques as an effective means of relieving stress

Protect Yourself and Your Family from COVID-19

- Wash your hands regularly
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Clean all surfaces: doorknobs, counters, and handrails
- Seek treatment for medical and mental health conditions when you have symptoms
- Follow guidelines from local authorities on social distancing and sheltering in place

Other Helpful Tips

- **Find resources and support in your community.** Identify professionals that can provide mental health and medical treatment, and other services.
- **Use trustworthy sources for information.** During times of crisis, access to accurate information is critical. Rely on reputable organizations for guidance and avoid overexposure to news that can cause stress.
- **Expand your social support system and network.** Stay in close contact with family and friends outside your household, by phone or by using technology to increase interactions and minimize isolation.
- **Express your emotions.** Holding in your feelings can be unhealthy. Know that at times of uncertainty it's normal to experience a range of emotions. Share your feelings with family and friends you can confide in.
- **We are in this together.** Remember everyone's journey is different, so be patient with yourself and others.

VOICES SUPPORT Phone: 203-966-3911; Email: VoicesSupport@voicesofsept11.org

MISSION From 9/11 to today, VOICES helps families and communities heal after tragedy. VOICES assists communities in preparing for and recovering from traumatic events, and provides long-term support and resources that promote mental health care and wellness, for victims' families, responders and survivors.

Information courtesy of VOICES

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