

Mental Health Considerations Relating to the COVID-19 Outbreak

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak, many individuals may experience fear and anxiety due to the unpredictability of the spread of the virus internationally.



It is normal to experience anxiety, fear, deep sadness, and even nightmares after a traumatic event. If these symptoms do not seem to be getting better after several weeks, it may be time to seek mental health professional. Only a mental health professional can diagnose conditions like PTSD, depression, or anxiety, but it is important for you to be aware of what to watch for, so you know when to seek professional help.

WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

Recognizing Major Depression

Seek professional help if the symptoms below persist for more than two weeks, or if you have thoughts of suicide or self-harm:

- Sad mood almost all day, every day
- Loss of interest or pleasure
- Marked changes in appetite and weight
- Inability to sleep or sleeping too much
- Fatigue and loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Poor concentration, inability to think, or indecisiveness

Recognizing Anxiety

Many types of anxiety disorders could develop or be made worse by traumatic events, such as panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and phobias. Talk to a mental health professional if any of the following symptoms persist or become troublesome:

- Excessive worry
- Irritability or outbursts
- Sleep disturbance
- Difficulty concentrating
- Restlessness or feeling on edge
- Muscle tension
- Fatigue

Recognizing Post-Traumatic Stress

Seek professional help if these symptoms persist for more than one month:

- Recurring intrusive, distressing memories of the event, flashbacks, and nightmares of the trauma
- Increased arousal and feeling on edge, including inability to sleep, concentrate, or function normally
- Persistent avoidance of all reminders of the trauma
- Feeling detached
- Persistent feelings of anger, fear, guilt, horror, or shame

Recognizing Panic Attacks

Many panic attacks are sudden periods of intense fear that come on quickly and reach their peak within minutes. Talk to a mental health professional if any of the following panic attack symptoms persist or become troublesome:

- Heart palpitations
- Sweating
- Trembling or shaking
- Sensations or shortness of breath, smothering, or choking
- Feelings of impending doom
- Feelings of being out of control

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

voices
www.voicesofseptember11.org

06/2020

Mental Health Considerations Relating to the COVID-19 Outbreak

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak, many individuals may experience fear and anxiety due to the unpredictability of the spread of the virus internationally.



Community mandated restrictions have caused a disruption in daily routines, with children and adults working from home. Social isolation, fear of catching the virus, and financial insecurity due to job loss, may contribute to additional stress.

During widespread crisis, those who have predispositions to mental health conditions, a history of substance abuse, or domestic violence are especially vulnerable at this time. It is important to know the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions. Below is a summary of common reactions to stressors, danger signs, mental health conditions, and when to seek professional help.

REACTIONS AND SIGNALS TO MONITOR

Common Reactions to Stressors

- **Intense or unpredictable feelings.** You may feel sad, anxious, or nervous. You may feel irritable, angry, or moody, or you may experience feelings of guilt or self-blame.
- **Strains on your relationships.** Increased conflicts with family members, friends and colleagues can occur because you've been isolated or disengaged from your usual social life.
- **Physical symptoms.** You may have trouble sleeping or sleep too much. You may not have an appetite or begin overeating. You could have other physical symptoms like headaches, stomach aches, and chest pain.
- **Flashbacks.** You might experience vivid memories of prior traumas that occur out of the blue and can lead to physical reactions such as rapid heartbeat or sweating. This can make concentration and decision-making difficult.
- **Higher sensitivity.** Triggers such as sirens, loud noises, or other reminders of prior traumas can create heightened anxiety.

Danger Signals

Seek professional help if these symptoms persist:

- Thinking about suicide or self-harm
- Being alone too much
- Not being able to talk to other people about what you are feeling
- Sudden changes in weight
- Continued trouble sleeping
- Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, sleeping too much, or trouble relaxing
- Using too much alcohol or other drugs, including prescription drugs

Need to Talk to Someone?

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline

Phone: 1-800-985-5990

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Domestic Violence Hotline (24/7)

Phone: 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-799-7233 for TTY

For More Information visit Voices of September 11th

Website: www.VoicesofSeptember11.org

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

voices
www.voicesofseptember11.org

06/2020