

# 10 MENTAL HEALTH TIPS FOR PEOPLE AT HIGH RISK FOR COVID-19

There are many factors that can put you in the "high-risk category" for coronavirus complications—from your age and your BMI to having immune deficiency, circulatory, diabetic, cardiac, and respiratory conditions.

Here is a psychotherapist's advice on handling your stress and staying safe.

## Focus on what you enjoy

Listen to music; watch some of many live-streamed concerts, movies, or lectures; or do a virtual museum tour. Whatever you love, find the time to do it!

- Check out *7 Things That Are Now Free Because of Coronavirus*.

## Ignore the news when possible

As much as possible, avoid repetitive newscasts and press conferences. Stay informed, but don't inundate yourself. In fact, a recent study published in the journal *Risk Analysis* suggests that having more knowledge about coronavirus may only heighten your anxiety.

## Reach out to loved ones

Stay in touch with loved ones via phone, FaceTime, text, or Facebook messenger. When physical touch is not an option, being in touch electronically is a lifesaver. When I feel pangs of loneliness, I call family or friends, some of whom I haven't spoken to for years. And with social media, I feel as if I can have conversations with the world. age, sex, initial health status, and cause of death.

## Talk to your neighbors from a safe distance

Talk to neighbors from a distance. Some neighborhoods "get together" from their lawns and balconies and sing. Finding a way to connect with people in person but at a safe distance is key.

## Get exercise

Walk in your neighborhood if it is safe to do so. Ride a bike. Workout in your home. Keep some hand weights and an exercise ball in your living room so it is right in front of you!

## Be aware of potentially dangerous habits

If your default mode is to self-medicate with alcohol, food, or tobacco, give yourself a break from that if possible. It is easy to over-indulge when you're in a highly emotional state.

- **Recovery Talk:** Talk with a trained peer support specialist in North Dakota with lived experience in addiction to chat and receive support. 1-844-44TALK2

## Focus on the good

Pay attention to the good news out there. There are so many stories of people doing good deeds for others—and those are the ones to keep reading.

## Be grateful

Focus on what you are grateful for.

## Feel all of your emotions

Cry, rage, laugh, sigh—all are fair game in a time such as this. Don't question how you're feeling. Just allow yourself to feel. And remember that this too shall pass and that there will be a time when we'll find our "new normal," having learned some valuable lessons about the importance of our relationships, the treasure of our health, and the resilience that we can exhibit.

## Keep up with your mental health

If you are working with a therapist, be sure to keep your appointments.

- Download the **COVID Coach app** to support self-care and overall mental health during the pandemic