

Safety Bulletin

COVID-19: Your Mental Health

Human beings are creatures of habit: we crave routine, dependability, and stability in our daily lives. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our routines, leaving us struggling to adjust to new norms and uncertainty. Health and economic fears, compounded by the uncertainty of knowing when things will be back to normal can result in stress, anxiety, and depression.

At BuildLACCD, we encourage you to think about your mental health and find what works for you.

We're All Grieving for the Lives We Used to Have

Unfortunately, none of us knows what the future holds and even with the recent progress, we do not know what "normal" will be. Many of us continue to struggle with everchanging schedules, which may lead to a feeling of loss of control.

Aim to focus on what you can control. For example, create and stick to a routine that helps your physical self.

- Set a bedtime alarm and try to get a minimum of 7-8 hours each night. Kids need even more. <http://www.cdc.gov/sleep/index.html>
- Schedule time for exercise like you would a meeting.
- Set aside some time to socializing with friends online or over the phone.
- Start a new hobby that centers on [self-care](#).

In addition, don't forget the little things – especially brushing your teeth three times a day. It may be more difficult to get dental appointments, so give yourself and your family one less thing to worry about.

Find a Way to Deal with Stress

Living through long periods of stress can trigger bad behaviors or lead to physical issues, like [high blood pressure](#), heart disease, stroke, and more. It's more important than ever to [find healthy strategies](#) to cope with chronic stress.

- Manage stress by staying informed and focus on personal strengths.
- Stay connected with family, friends, community groups or faith groups.
- Keep a positive attitude and outlook.

Adults aren't the only ones experiencing stress during the pandemic: your kids, [being out of school](#) and away from their friends and relatives, are going through stress, too. [Talk to them honestly](#) about it and listen to what they have to say. Engage kids in activities that can be done together like a virtual dance party or going for a walk or bike ride.

Give Yourself a Break

Most of us have never been through anything as intense as the COVID-19 pandemic, and it's taking a lot out of us, physically and emotionally. It may be harder to keep up with house cleaning, working out, or achieving personal goals like losing weight, reorganizing every closet or learning French. And that's OK – you don't have to be perfect. It's still important to set goals but think consider breaking them down into milestones to guide your journey. Concentrate on what you achieve every day and celebrate your success. *Mètapes!*

If You Smoke, Now is a Great Time to Quit

There is one goal that is more important than ever: quitting smoking, vaping, or any tobacco use. Even if you think having a cigarette or two can help you get through the day, there has never been a better time to quit. Smoking or **vaping** makes you even more vulnerable to severe COVID-19 infections and there is evidence that secondhand smoke puts your family members at risk too. Whether it is your first try or 15th, **you can do it!**

Coping with the Loss of a Loved One

Over the last year, many of us have experience or known someone that has passed away. The death of a loved one is always difficult under the best of circumstances, but with the need for social distancing, it has been especially difficult. **After the loss**, it is normal to feel disbelief or lost, resulting in difficulty in concentrating, sleeping or depression. It is important during this time, you practice self-care, take all the time you need to heal and reach out for support.

BuildLACCD Community

It's natural to feel worried, sad, and lonely but if these feelings start interfering with your ability to get through your daily life or start making you feel bad physically, it may be time to ask for help. To learn more about Behavioral Health Services contact Los Angeles County **<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/our-services/>** If you need immediate assistance or need to find services in your area, please call the ACCESS Center 24/7 Helpline at **[1-800-854-7771](tel:1-800-854-7771)**.

Or contact your health care provide for tailored resources for you and your family.