



FOR COVID-19 STRESS, PRESCRIBE SELF-CARE

Self-care is key to good health – especially during tough times such as these. Self-care helps people develop inner strength and mental resilience, which are potent antidotes to anxiety and depression. Healthy self-care habits also improve people’s physical fitness and strengthen immunity.

If the COVID-19 crisis is causing emotional, social, physical and economic hardship for your patients or for you, self-care may be just what the doctor ordered. Here are six self-care tips that you can recommend to your patients and staff or try yourself. When people choose healthy activities they enjoy, they are more likely to continue them — and hopefully develop lifelong healthy lifestyle habits!



SHARE THESE SIX SELF-CARE TIPS!

1 Reach out to friends and family

Keep in touch with people you trust on a routine basis (daily, if possible).

- Call or text friends and family to connect on a personal level. If you have children in your life, read them a story or tell them a story from your own life.
- Use FaceTime or Skype to express your feelings and laugh (which lets pent up feelings go).

2 Call a warm line

A free community service. Volunteers who are trained to listen are on hand any time 24/7.

- Peer-Run Warm Line: **1-855-845-7415** (online chat also available)
- Friendship Line (for seniors): **1-888-670-1360**

3 Think positive

Studies show that people with a “glass half-full” outlook are healthier and less stressed. They can even live longer!

- Do something that gives you a sense of accomplishment. For example, take a walk, garden, clean, read, listen to a favorite song/album/podcast or try a new recipe.
- Practice positive self-talk. You might think, “Being alone all the time is just too sad. I’ll never get through this.” Instead, try “I’ve been through challenging times before and I am strong enough to make it through this.”
- Try to remember a specific happy memory in detail. That will help you feel good now.

4 Put your feelings down on paper

This will help you process unhelpful thoughts and feelings.

- Journals let you to look back with self-confidence at how you coped with challenges. They can also help you think through or “feel through” difficult feelings.
- Start a “gratitude journal” where you jot down things that went well in your day. They can be big or small, such as laughing with a friend, seeing a beautiful sunset or walking your dog.
- If you don’t want to write, draw pictures about how you feel.

5 Learn something new

Expand your skills and knowledge to keep your mind active and engaged.

- Look for virtual tours of museums or places you’d like to visit.
- Read about a topic that has nothing to do with the news. Is there someone or some time period you’ve always wanted to know more about? This is a great time to learn more by reading book watching a documentary on that subject.
- Keep your brain challenged with online puzzles, crosswords or sudoku.
- Practice a musical instrument to keep your mind focused and engaged. Keep your mind focused and engaged.

6 Take care of yourself

Nurture your mind, body and spirit!

- Reading novels, listening to audiobooks and watching movies are great ways to distract yourself for a bit and enjoy the fun of storytelling.
- Put on some of your favorite music, close your eyes and listen without distractions or talking. Focusing only on the music can help soothe you and calm your mind.
- Try meditation. Sit and focus on your breathing. Try breathing in as you count to five, hold your breath for a count of six, and then release your breath as you count to seven. Doing this a few times is a quick way to feel more relaxed. Or you can do a guided meditation:
 - Search for a guided meditation online (e.g., YouTube)
 - Download a free app such as:
 - ▶ Calm - For sleep, meditation and relaxation
 - ▶ My Life Meditation - Helps you stop, breathe and think clearly
- Listen to podcasts that support self-care, such as “On Purpose” with Jay Shetty
- Eat well. Keep a food journal to track your healthy eating efforts and jot down your intentions to become mindful of what you’re eating.
- Go outside. If you are unable to get outside, sit near a window with natural light.

As a medical provider, you can assess members regularly for possible mental health or substance use treatment needs. Please use the Behavioral Health Screening tools to help determine if a referral is appropriate. The tools can be found at www.hpsm.org/provider/resources/forms.

Support is available If your patients have trouble getting started or feel like they are not making progress you can refer them to mental health or substance use services that are part of their benefit. Download the Behavioral Health Referral referral form at www.hpsm.org/provider/authorizations/referrals, complete it and send it in. You can also refer the member or call the ACCESS Call center directly to be assessed for treatment at **1-800-686-0101**.

www.hpsm.org/covid-19/behavioral-health-support for additional community resources including help hotlines for crisis and emotional support as well as domestic violence and substance use.