

## HCM Emotional/Spiritual Resources for coping with stress and anxiety during COVID-19:

When you are involved in a public health crisis or the threat of a potential public health incident, these events can affect your personal health and well-being. Everyone — adults, teens, and even children, experiences stress and each one uniquely. Stress is a mental, physical, and emotional strain resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. Stress can result from any change, whether positive (e.g. preparing for a wedding) or negative (e.g. dealing with a natural disaster).

Learning healthy ways to cope and getting the right care and support can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms. During stressful times, it is imperative to monitor your physical and mental health. Learn to recognize the signs of stress and know when to implement healthy behaviors.

### **What to expect of stress:**

Feeling emotional and nervous or having trouble sleeping and eating can all be normal reactions to stress.

- Recognize and heed early warning signs of stress:
  - Increased or decreased energy
  - Irritability
  - Outbursts
  - Difficulty relaxing or sleeping
  - Placing blame others
  - Difficulty communicating
  - Headaches
  - Loss of appetite (or overeating)
  - Sweating and chills
  - Depression
  - Guilt
  - Anger
  - Apathy
  - Sadness
  - Difficulty remembering things
  - Confusion
  - Excessive worrying
  - Difficulty making decisions
- Recognize how your own experiences affect your way of handling an event.

### **Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress:**

- Take Care of Yourself
  - Eat healthy, well-balanced meals and drink plenty of water
  - Relax your body often by doing what works for you — take deep breaths, stretch, exercise, go for a walk, meditate, engage in pleasurable hobbies, or something as simple as washing your face and hands
  - Get plenty of sleep
  - Give yourself a break if you start to feel stressed out
  - “Interrupt” your anxious thoughts by engaging in activity or conversation.
- Talk to others. Share your problems about your feelings with a parent, friend, counselor, doctor, or pastor

- Take a break
  - If news events are causing your stress, take a break from listening or watching the news
  - Use time off to relax — eat a good meal, read, listen to music, take a bath or talk to family
- Inform yourself with truth: See the CDC and Texas State Department of Health for updates and accurate guidelines for precaution.
- Recognize when you need more help. If problems continue or you are thinking about suicide, talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor

### **Pay Attention to Your Body, Feelings and Spirit:**

- Focus on the ways you handled previous stressful events well
- Connect with your community support. Our local Needs Council, Food Pantry, and Churches continue to provide practical and emotional support.
- Take time to pray and connect to your community of faith

### **How to Help Children and Adolescents**

- Provide a safe environment
- Remain calm — children and adolescents will mimic your behavior
- Keep normal routines
- Share age-appropriate information
- Prevent or limit media exposure
- Practice active listening
- Teach coping skills:
  - Slow breathing
  - Counting
  - Calming music
  - Soft pillows, blankets or stuffed animals

HCM is committed to providing physical, medical, and informational support to our community during this time. Follow the HCM Wellness Center on Facebook to view Live and recorded exercise classes. See the HCM Updates Page: [HCMCOVID19.org](https://www.hcmcoVID19.org) for updates. We also make provisions for your spiritual support and can connect you to a chaplain by phone, as you need. To reach us, please call the HCM Information Line at 830.990.6100, and ask for a chaplain or 830.990.6125. The chaplain will listen carefully to you and provide spiritual assistance and prayer for callers.

A prayer for our time:

The light of God surrounds me;  
 The love of God enfolds me;  
 The power of God protects me;  
 The presence of God watches over me  
 Wherever I am, God is.  
 All will be well.