

Updated: 3/24/20

## Support and Resources for Crisis Counselors During the COVID-19 Crisis

As we continue to support people during the COVID-19 crisis, it's normal and expected that the stress of this pandemic is also impacting you. It can be harder to support callers right now, especially when their concerns are centered around an issue that's also affecting your life. We believe in the philosophy of putting on your own oxygen mask before helping others; your well-being is critical for yourself, your loved ones, and the callers you support. To help you manage the stress you may be feeling, we've pulled together this list of resources. We appreciate the crucial work you're doing and hope these tools help you navigate through this stressful time.

### Staying informed

- **CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 Website:** [cdc.gov/covid19](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19)
  - The most up-to-date information on the coronavirus and the CDC's response
  - Tip sheets on the website are available in English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese
- **SAMHSA Tip Sheet:** [Coping with Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#)
- **SAMHSA Tip Sheet:** [Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health – Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation](#)
- [What Therapists Tell Patients Who Are Anxious About Coronavirus](#)
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center:** [Supporting mental health and coping during COVID-19](#)

### Physical activity

- Step away from your desk/computer when you're not taking a shift
- Getting outside if possible in your area to go for a walk or get fresh air
- Get up and stretch at least once an hour. Set alarms if helpful
- Check out all the free exercise and yoga videos from gyms, studios, and fitness apps or free YouTube yoga and exercise videos
  - Exercise has a number of mind-body benefits, including anti-inflammatory effects on brain function and cortisol levels, which can positively affect mood
  - Planet Fitness is offering free "Work Ins" live every night at 7pm on [FB live](#) and archived and available for anytime on their [YouTube channel](#)
- Small, doable projects like cleaning out and organizing drawers, closets, art supplies
- [Desk stretches](#). Stretches you can do at your desk to relieve tension

### Relaxation/Distraction Tools

- [Safe Space](#). Our new site with calming music, interactive visuals, and links to helpful resources
- [Body scan meditation](#). Three-minute guided meditation
- [Music and meditation from Calm](#). Calm has released several music and meditation tracks here that don't require a log-in to access
- [Virtual museum tours](#). Take a tour through 12 famous museums
- [Lunch Doodles](#). with Mo Willems. Learners worldwide can draw, doodle and explore new ways of writing by visiting Mo's studio virtually once a day for the next few weeks
- [Storyline Online](#). Free stories read by celebrities
- [Breathe2Relax App](#). Stress-management app that uses breathing exercises to manage stress.

- [Breathe](#). This video provides a focused, interactive breathing exercise
- [Stop, Breathe & Think](#). Check in with how you're feeling, and try short activities tuned to your emotions
- There are lots of free "coloring" or puzzle apps. Some options:
  - <https://www.jigsawplanet.com/>
  - <https://printablefreecoloring.com/categories/relaxation/>

### **Anxiety Support Tools**

- [54321 Grounding](#). A grounding technique to help manage anxiety
- [Virtual Hope Box](#). Simple tools to help with coping, relaxation, distraction, and positive thinking.
- [MoodKit](#). Engage in over 200 mood enhancement activities
- [Pacifica](#). Helps with anxiety through soothing meditation and other personalized self-help strategies
- [SAM App](#). (Self-help for Anxiety Management). Helps you monitor anxious thoughts, track behavior over time, and use guided self-help exercises to discourage stress.
- [Sanvello](#). Teaches you CBT through immersive journeys that combine videos, audio exercises, activities, and mood and health habit tracking

### **Connection**

- Intentionally setting aside time to connect with others by text, phone, or video
- Connect with other crisis centers to support each other and learn best practices each center has developed
  - [Lifeline Network Centers Facebook Group](#)
  - Lifeline office hours (links emailed for each event)
- Virtual hang-outs with friends, family, and colleagues using tools like FaceTime, Google Hangouts, Slack, Zoom, etc.
  - [NetflixParty](#). Watch movies online with friends & family
  - Virtual game nights through online video games, board games, and RPGs
  - Virtual book club
- Online spiritual or religious services. Many religious and spiritual organizations are now offering online streaming options for services and programs. Contact your local organization or visit their website.