

## Introduction

In an infectious disease outbreak, when social distancing and self-quarantine are needed to limit and control the spread of the disease, continued social connectedness to maintain recovery are critically important. Virtual resources can and should be used during this time.

This tip sheet describes resources that can be used to virtually support recovery from mental/substance use disorders. It also provides resources to help local recovery programs create virtual meetings.

## Virtual Recovery Programs

- **Alcoholics Anonymous:** Offers online support <http://aa-intergroup.org/>
- **Cocaine Anonymous:** Offers online support and services <https://www.ca-online.org/>
- **LifeRing:** LifeRing Secular Recovery offers online support <https://www.lifering.org/online-meetings>
- **In The Rooms - Online Recovery Meetings:** Provides online support through live meetings and discussion groups <https://www.intherooms.com/home/>
- **Marijuana Anonymous:** Offers virtual support <https://ma-online.org/>
- **Narcotics Anonymous:** Offers a variety of online and skype meeting options <https://www.na.org/meetingsearch/>
- **Reddit Recovery:** Offers a virtual hang out and support during recovery <https://www.reddit.com/r/REDDITORSI/NRECOVERY/>
- **Refuge Recovery:** Provides online and virtual support <http://bit.ly/refuge-recovery1>
- **Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART) Recovery:** Offers global community of mutual-support groups, forums including a chat room and message board <https://www.smartrecovery.org/community/>
- **SoberCity:** Offers an online support and recovery community <https://www.sobercity.com/>
- **Sobergrid:** Offers an online platform to help anyone get sober and stay sober <https://www.sobergrid.com/>
- **Soberistas:** Provides a women-only international online recovery community <https://soberistas.com/>
- **Sober Recovery:** Provides an online forum for those in recovery and their friends and family <https://www.soberrecovery.com/forums/>

- **We Connect Recovery:** Provides daily online recovery groups for those with substance use and mental illness  
<https://www.weconnectrecovery.com/free-online-support-meetings>
- **Unity Recovery + WEconnect + Alano Club:** Providing daily virtual meeting for those in recovery and for their family members  
<https://unityrecovery.org/digital-recovery-meetings>

## RECOVERY RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

- **The National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) HelpLine** Coronavirus Information and Resources Guide  
<http://bit.ly/NAMIresource>
- **Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation** contains online support meetings, blogs, mobile apps, social media groups, and movie suggestions, including the online support community, *The Daily Pledge*:  
<https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/recovery/tools/daily-pledge> and "Tips for Staying Connected and Safeguarding Your Addiction Recovery": <http://bit.ly/HBF-Tips>
- **Shatterproof:** "How I'm Coping with COVID-19 and Social Isolation as a Person in Long-Term Recovery" provides helpful suggestions  
<http://bit.ly/shatterproof-coping>
- **The Chopra Center:** "Anxious About the Coronavirus? Here Are Eight Practical Tips on How to Stay Calm and Support Your Immune System." <http://bit.ly/Chopra-calm>

## TIPS TO SET UP A VIRTUAL RECOVERY MEETING

Simple steps for 12 step groups using various virtual platforms for meetings:

<https://www.nyintergroup.org/remote-meeting-listing/help-setting-up-online-meetings/#zoom>

To host a meeting on zoom:

1. Set up a free account here:  
<https://zoom.us> When you set up a free account, you can only host a meeting for 45 minutes. To host longer meetings, you need a paid account.
2. Schedule a meeting  
<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362413-Scheduling-meetings>
3. Invite people to join a meeting :  
<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362183-How-do-I-invite-others-to-join-a-meeting->
4. Create a flyer to publicize meetings. This flyer is sent to group members via email and text, posted on self-help group's District Website and posted on door of the physical site that is closed in an attempt to reach anyone who shows up for a meeting.

## Helpful Resources

### Hotlines

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline

Toll-Free: 1-800-985-5990 (English and español)

SMS: Text TalkWithUs to 66746

SMS (español): "Hablanos" al 66746

TTY: 1-800-846-8517

Website (English): <http://www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>

WEBSITE (ESPAÑOL):

[HTTP://WWW.DISASTERDISTRESS.SAMHSA.GOV/espanol.aspx](http://WWW.DISASTERDISTRESS.SAMHSA.GOV/espanol.aspx)

### SAMHSA's National Helpline

Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (24/7/365 Treatment Referral Information Service in English and español)

Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Toll-Free (English): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Toll-Free (español): 1-888-628-9454

TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)

Website(English):

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Website (español):

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/gethelp/spanish.aspx>

### Treatment Locator Behavioral Health Treatment Services

#### Locator Website:

<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator/home>

For help finding treatment 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

<https://findtreatment.gov/>

### SAMHSA Disaster Technical Assistance Center

Toll-Free: 1-800-308-3515

Email: [DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:DTAC@samhsa.hhs.gov)

Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>

**Note: Inclusion or mention of a resource in this fact sheet does not imply endorsement by the Center for Mental Health Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.**

## Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak

### What Is Social Distancing?

Social distancing is a way to keep people from interacting closely or frequently enough to spread an infectious disease. Schools and other gathering places such as movie theaters may close, and sports events and religious services may be cancelled.

### What Is Quarantine?

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. It lasts long enough to ensure the person has not contracted an infectious disease.

### What Is Isolation?

Isolation prevents the spread of an infectious disease by separating people who are sick from those who are not. It lasts as long as the disease is contagious.

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In the event of an infectious disease outbreak, local officials may require the public to take measures to limit and control the spread of the disease. This tip sheet provides information about **social distancing**, **quarantine**, and **isolation**. The government has the right to enforce federal and state laws related to public health if people within the country get sick with highly contagious diseases that have the potential to develop into outbreaks or pandemics.

This tip sheet describes feelings and thoughts you may have during and after social distancing, quarantine, and isolation. It also suggests ways to care

for your behavioral health during these experiences and provides resources for more help.

## What To Expect: Typical Reactions

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations such as an infectious disease outbreak that requires social distancing, quarantine, or isolation. People may feel:

- **Anxiety, worry, or fear related to:**
  - Your own health status
  - The health status of others whom you may have exposed to the disease
  - The resentment that your friends and family may feel if they need to go into quarantine as a result of contact with you
  - The experience of monitoring yourself, or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of the disease
  - Time taken off from work and the potential loss of income and job security
  - The challenges of securing things you need, such as groceries and personal care items
  - **Concern** about being able to effectively care for children or others in your care
  - **Uncertainty or frustration** about how long you will need to remain in this situation, and uncertainty about the future
  - **Loneliness** associated with feeling cut off from the world and from loved ones
  - **Anger** if you think you were exposed to the disease because of others' negligence
  - **Boredom and frustration** because you may not be able to work or engage in regular day-to-day activities
  - **Uncertainty or ambivalence** about the situation
  - **A desire** to use alcohol or drugs to cope
  - **Symptoms of depression**, such as feelings of hopelessness, changes in appetite, or sleeping

too little or too much

- Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), such as intrusive distressing memories, flashbacks (reliving the event), nightmares, changes in thoughts and mood, and being easily startled

If you or a loved one experience any of these reactions for 2 to 4 weeks or more, contact your health care provider or one of the resources at the end of this tip sheet.

## Ways To Support Yourself During Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation

### UNDERSTAND THE RISK

Consider the real risk of harm to yourself and others around you. The public perception of risk during a situation such as an infectious disease outbreak is often inaccurate. Media coverage may create the impression that people are in immediate danger when really the risk for infection may be very low. Take steps to get the facts:

- Stay up to date on what is happening, while limiting your media exposure. Avoid watching or listening to news reports 24/7 since this tends to increase anxiety and worry. Remember that children are especially affected by what they hear and see on television.
- Look to credible sources for information on the infectious disease outbreak (see page 3 for sources of reliable outbreak-related information).

### BE YOUR OWN ADVOCATE

Speaking out about your needs is particularly important if you are in quarantine,

since you may not be in a hospital or other facility where your basic needs are met. Ensure you have what you need to feel safe, secure, and comfortable.

- Work with local, state, or national health officials to find out how you can arrange for groceries and toiletries to be delivered to your home as needed.
- Inform health care providers or health authorities of any needed medications and work with them to ensure that you continue to receive those medications.

### EDUCATE YOURSELF

Health care providers and health authorities should provide information on the disease, its diagnosis, and treatment.

- Do not be afraid to ask questions—clear communication with a health care provider may help reduce any distress associated with social distancing, quarantine, or isolation.
- Ask for written information when available.
- Ask a family member or friend to obtain information in the event that you are unable to secure this information on your own.

### WORK WITH YOUR EMPLOYER TO REDUCE FINANCIAL STRESS

If you're unable to work during this time, you may experience stress related to your job status or financial situation.

- Provide your employer with a clear explanation of why you are away from work.
- Contact the U.S. Department of Labor toll-free at 1-866-487-2365 about the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which allows U.S. employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for serious medical conditions, or to care for a family member with a

serious medical condition.

- Contact your utility providers, cable and Internet provider, and other companies from whom you get monthly bills to explain your situation and request alternative bill payment arrangements as needed.

#### CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Reaching out to people you trust is one of the best ways to reduce anxiety, depression, loneliness, and boredom during social distancing, quarantine, and isolation. You can:

- Use the telephone, email, text messaging, and social media to connect with friends, family, and others.
- Talk “face to face” with friends and loved ones using Skype or FaceTime.
- If approved by health authorities and your health care providers, arrange for your friends and loved ones to bring you newspapers, movies, and books.

#### Sources for Reliable Outbreak-Related Information

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027  
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)  
<http://www.cdc.gov>

**World Health Organization**  
Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization  
525 23rd Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-974-3000  
<http://www.who.int/en>

- Sign up for emergency alerts via text or email to ensure you get updates as soon as they are available.
- Call SAMHSA’s free 24-hour Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990, if you feel lonely or need support.
- Use the Internet, radio, and television to keep up with local, national, and world events.
- If you need to connect with someone because of an ongoing alcohol or drug problem, consider calling your local Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous offices.

#### TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

If you are in a medical facility, you may have access to health care providers who can answer your questions. However, if you are quarantined at home, and you’re worried about physical symptoms you or your loved ones may be experiencing, call your doctor or other health care provider:

- Ask your provider whether it would be possible to schedule remote appointments via Skype or FaceTime for mental health, substance use, or physical health needs.
- In the event that your doctor is unavailable and you are feeling stressed or are in crisis, call the hotline numbers listed at the end of this tip sheet for support.

#### USE PRACTICAL WAYS TO COPE AND RELAX

- Relax your body often by doing things that work for you—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate or pray, or engage in activities you enjoy.
- Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do something fun after a hard task.
- Talk about your experiences and feelings to loved ones and friends, if you find it helpful.
- Maintain a sense of hope and positive

thinking; consider keeping a journal where you write down things you are grateful for or that are going well.

#### **AFTER SOCIAL DISTANCING, QUARANTINE, OR ISOLATION**

You may experience mixed emotions, including a sense of relief. If you were isolated because you had the illness, you may feel sadness or anger because friends and loved ones may have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious.

The best way to end this common fear is to learn about the disease and the actual risk to others. Sharing this information will often calm fears in others and allow you to reconnect with them.

If you or your loved ones experience symptoms of extreme stress—such as trouble sleeping, problems with eating too much or too little, inability to carry out routine daily activities, or using drugs or alcohol to cope—speak to a health care provider or call one of the hotlines listed to the right for a referral.

**If you are feeling overwhelmed with emotions such as sadness, depression, anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or someone else, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).**

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