

Frequently Asked Questions and Things to Say to Callers

Regarding: COVID-19

If staff receive a call from an individual who is distressed or anxious about the current state of COVID-19 or other life challenges, you are encouraged to say the following to help them. As you talk, you will need to remain calm and may need to repeat statements or questions.

1. It is hard for me to understand exactly what you are going through, but I can see that it's distressing for you.
 - People often need the opportunity to talk about their feelings. They may feel great relief at being able to do this.
2. Have you spoken to anyone about this before? If that was helpful, it might help again to call them.
 - Sometimes it will be difficult—the person might want to give up trying to find help or might get frustrated during the process—but if you're kind, genuine and persistent, you can help sway them. However, always make sure they're involved in the decision-making, because treating the person with respect and giving them autonomy is equally important.
3. If the person says no, they have not spoken to anyone about this before offer the following.
 - I think it's important that if you are really feeling fearful or concerned, you see or call your family physician OR call one of these numbers for assistance. What County do you live in/reside? Let me give you the number to your local behavioral health agency in case we are disconnected. Also, let me give you state and national numbers for assistance in case we are disconnected.
 1. Your Local Mental Health Agency is (see below). There are trained counselors available 24/7/365 to offer crisis counseling and emotional support.
 2. or National Disaster Helpline at 1-800-985-5990; press "2" for Spanish and texts at "TalkWithUs" to 66746. There are trained counselors available 24/7/365 to offer crisis counseling and emotional support. Additionally, you can contact the NC COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Call Center at 866-462-3821 if you have specific questions or concerns related to COVID-19 in North Carolina.
 - Encourage the person to explore these options, offer to transfer them to the numbers listed above/below based on the best option for them to keep them motivated throughout the process.

LME-MCO's Contacts:

Vaya Health

Crisis Line: 800-849-6127

Counties Served: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, Yancey

Cardinal Innovations

Crisis Line: 800-939-5911

Counties Served: Alamance, Cabarrus, Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Franklin, Granville, Halifax, Mecklenburg, Orange, Rockingham, Person, Rowan, Stanly, Stokes, Union, Vance and Warren

Partners Health

Crisis Line: 888-235-4673

Counties Served: Burke, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Rutherford, Surry, Yadkin

Alliance Health

Crisis Line: 800-510-9132

Counties Served: Cumberland, Durham, Johnston, Wake

Sandhills Center

Crisis Line: 800-256-2452

Counties Served: Anson, Guilford, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, Richmond

Trillium Health Resources

Crisis Line: 877-685-2415

Counties Served: Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Nash, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Martin, Northampton, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell, Washington

Eastpointe

Crisis Line: 800-913-6109

Counties Served: Bladen, Duplin, Edgecombe, Greene, Lenoir, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Wayne, Wilson

Five Simple Ways to Reduce Coronavirus Anxiety: Taking Care of Your Mental Health

The coronavirus outbreak is feeding three key ingredients that cause anxiety:

1. Unpredictability: when we don't have a clear sense of what may happen next.
2. Lack of control: when we believe we do not have direct control for managing issues appropriately.
3. Threats to people or things we value.

1. Limit your exposure to news and social media.

In the article, *Coronavirus-Anxiety Tips for Reducing Worries* (McCrimmon, 2020), Psychologist Justin Ross, states "Anxiety can build from media exposure. Limit your consumption. Pick one or two trusted sources that you are going to rely on and screen out all the others. Schedule two times a day that you are going to check the news and consume media for no more than five minutes each time. That's long enough to scan the latest information. But, any longer than that is going to spiral your anxiety."

Schedule times to view updates. Plan to check your news sources or social media feeds just twice a day and make those checks brief. Otherwise, avoid updates that could be feeding your coronavirus anxiety.

2. Focus on controlling what you can control.

"We feel anxiety when we are trying to control the things that are inherently outside our control," Ross said.

Of course, the average person cannot control how widely the coronavirus outbreak will spread. We can't control if our child's school will close or if an important work conference will get canceled or if our 401K retirement savings shrinks dramatically.

So, Ross advises people to instead focus on the simple powers we do have.

"We can wash our hands. We can take precautions," he said. "We can give ourselves the best chance of staying healthy."

Thorough hand washing is the No. 1 way people can stay healthy and avoid spreading the coronavirus. And, we can take reasonable precautions, like staying home from school or work when we are sick, not dipping our hands in community candy or food bowls and skipping big group functions now if we have underlying health issues or our immune systems are compromised.

3. Get plenty of rest.

Multiple studies have shown that a good night's sleep can boost your immune system and prevent you from getting sick. Quality of sleep for enough hours a night also helps with mood and can reduce anxiety. If you are not sleeping well, seek help from your primary care provider or a sleep expert. There are some common and treatable causes for poor sleep, like sleep apnea. Ask your primary care provider or a sleep specialist for help.

4. Breathe.

Engage in very simple, 5-minute deep breathing sessions at least three times a day.

“Breathing helps us manage the anxiety response on a physical, physiological and mental level,” Ross said.

You don't need any special equipment, but if an app helps, he recommends the free version of an app called Insight Timer.

Unless you are using your phone to help you breathe deeply, be sure to set it aside during your relaxation sessions.

5. Enjoy the outdoors and get exercise.

References

Katie Kerwin McCrimmon, U. (2020, March 9). *Coronavirus-Anxiety-Tips-for-Reducing-Worries*. Retrieved from National Council for Behavioral Health:
<https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/BH365/2020/03/13/resources-for-addressing-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Kitchener BA, J. A. (2015). *Mental Health First Aid USA Manual*. Washington DC: National Council for Behavioral Health.