

Mental Health Resources for Coping with Social Distancing

As a university student during this time in history, you will be facing significant change. Across the world, students are transitioning to online education, socially distancing from peer groups and most likely hunkering down in their family homes. We know that change creates stress but we also know that stress is a normal and even necessary part of life. As you make this new journey through life, greatly affected by the coronavirus pandemic, here are some reminders for the road ahead:

- **Keep perspective:** You are not alone. This is uncharted territory for everyone. In time, we will return to normalcy. If you feel your emotions escalating, try to catch yourself. Consider the following statements:
 - “We’re all going through this together.”
 - “Change is always stressful, but I’ll adjust soon.”
 - “Soon, life will return to normal again.”
 - “These new challenges are an invitation to learn and grow.”
- **Be patient:** It will take a little time for you to adjust to this new normal, but you will adjust. It will take a little time for your professors to adjust to their new ways of virtual interaction. Practice the following when you are feeling overwhelmed:
 - Take 4 deep breaths, counting to 4 when inhaling and exhaling.
 - Remind yourself of what is at stake: “This is to flatten the infection curve and protect those who are most vulnerable.”
 - Take a break from the task at hand and walk around, text someone, use a mental health app (link below), or interact with your pet.
- **Establish new routines:** Humans are creatures of habit and once we have our daily routines in place we feel better. Establish routines that include:
 - Sleeping with a regular schedule.
 - Keeping a daily schedule that includes academic commitments AND relaxation.
 - Eat regular meals and snacks.
 - Schedule exercise into your day.
- **Practice positive self-talk:** We are constantly running an internal dialogue with ourselves. Become aware of it and try to shape it to be positive. Examples are:
 - “I’m doing the best I can.”
 - “I can manage feeling stressed. It won’t last forever.”
 - “Others are doing the best they can.”
 - “I accept myself just the way I am.”
- **Practice Self-Care:** We must always be thinking about how to take better care of ourselves. Some ways might include:
 - Limit media consumption if you find it distressing.
 - Use a mental health app (link below).
 - Exercise and eat well.
 - Talk to others.
 - Minimize use of alcohol and drugs which can affect mood.
- **Ask for help.** Be vocal about what you need. There are many campus people who can help, including professors, tutors, advisers, counselors and ministers.
 - Remember it is a sign of strength and self-awareness to ask for help.

- If you don't know who to ask, ask a friend for help.
- **Stay informed.** The developments about the coronavirus' impact are changing at a dramatic speed. Connect with valid sources of information. Marquette offers an excellent webpage:
 - [Marquette University's Coronavirus website](#)
- **Feeling isolated?** Social distancing may seem unbearable as a concept, but consider the following;
 - Get outside! Walk your neighborhood. Visit a park. Wave and say hello to others along the way.
 - Set up group meetings with friends to check in and be social.
 - Text, email or maybe even write a letter to friends and family you haven't been in contact with.
 - Follow an online/social media exercise, dance or yoga instruction.
 - If you are feeling distressed, be sure to reach out to others.

Resources from the Counseling Center

If you need help with a mental health issue, please call the Counseling Center at 414-288-7172, 9 am to 3 pm. A counselor will help you determine what resources would best serve you. If you are having thoughts about harming yourself or others, immediately call the Counseling Center. If you are in a life threatening situation, please go to the local ER or call 911. If you are in crisis and on campus after hours, call the Marquette University Police Department at 414-288-1911. For more information about services and resources visit the [Counseling Center webpage](#).

If you are looking for an external mental health provider, use the [Psychology Today Therapist Finder](#), ask your medical provider or contact your insurance company. Call the Counseling Center for referrals in Milwaukee.

Consider using a [mental health app](#) for relaxation, mood tracking, sleep or other issues.