

Explore these tips to manage COVID-19 pandemic-related stress

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Sara Berg, MS

News Editor

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, both adults and children have faced challenges that can be stressful and overwhelming, causing strong emotional responses—from feelings of fear and anger to sadness and exhaustion. While it is natural for people to feel anger, anxiety, grief and worry during the pandemic, learning to cope with stress in a healthy way is key to becoming more resilient.

The AMA's What Doctors Want Patients to Know™ series gives physicians a platform to share what they want patients to understand about today's health care headlines, especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here is a list of stories from this series on what doctors want patients to know about addressing—and managing—pandemic-related stress.

1 Cope with pandemic anger

It's easy to get angry when others don't seem to do their part to limit the spread of COVID-19, such as getting vaccinated or wearing masks in public indoor spaces. To describe this feeling of "pandemic angry," people have coined the portmanteau "pangry." But it's important to know how to overcome this feeling when others defy public health recommendations.

2 Recognize signs of COVID fatigue

People are experiencing a type of burnout that experts are calling COVID-19 fatigue, which can lead to careless behaviors and a sharp rise in cases. Recognizing signs of COVID fatigue and how to overcome them are vital for staying safe.

3 Get a good night's sleep

While COVID-19 has caused devastation around the world, physicians and researchers are seeing signs that the pandemic is also causing damage to people's sleep. This disruption is due to increased stress and anxiety, leading to what some sleep experts are calling "coronasomnia." If this is not addressed, coronasomnia could prove to have profound public health ramifications, including elevated risks for high blood pressure, depression and other health issues long after the pandemic has ended.

4 Dust off that social rust

Like the term coronasomnia, "social rust" has become part of our vocabulary during the pandemic. Also known as social anxiety, social rust is natural after dealing with the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. That's because the activities so many were used to doing, such as attending a social gathering or sharing a meal, may feel awkward or anxiety inducing. Knowing how to overcome that social rust is key.

5 Make lifestyle changes

The alarming state of chronic disease and health inequities exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a wake-up call for people outside the medical community. There is a growing need for people to commit to making lifestyle changes to help prevent chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease. However, patients are often uncertain of what changes they should make to improve their health and well-being.

6 Avoid unhealthy alcohol use

At the start of the pandemic, stay-at-home orders were in place across the country to curb the spread of COVID-19. Disrupted routines combined with the uncertainty of the pandemic led many people to feeling isolated at home while experiencing greater stress. As a result, some people became their own bartenders and progressed into heavier drinking patterns to cope with pandemic anger, stress and anxiety.

7 Cut down on screen time

While the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for everyone, digital tools have allowed people to work remotely, participate in school from home and maintain personal connections virtually. It is understandable that people are on their devices more now than ever before to remain connected. But spending too much time on screens can have negative health effects. That is why it is important to take proactive steps to cut down on screen time.

The AMA has developed a [COVID-19 resource center](#) as well as a [physician's guide to COVID-19](#) to give doctors a comprehensive place to find the latest resources and updates from the CDC and the World Health Organization.