

# MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK

As news of COVID-19 begins to surface it is natural to experience periods of: stress, anxiety, fear, sadness, frustration, helplessness, isolation, difficulty sleeping or concentration, or physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, upset stomach, or low energy.

## FOR KIDS

Help them to express their feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Every child has their own way to express emotions</li><li>• *Tip: try engaging in creative activities</li></ul>
Keep children close to their caregivers if possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid separating children and other family members</li><li>• If separated from their caregiver try to ensure twice daily communication</li></ul>
Maintain routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue in typical routines as much as possible</li><li>• Provide engaging learning activities for children</li><li>• Encourage play and socialization with others, even if only with family</li></ul>
Discuss COVID-19 with children in age appropriate way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Address their concerns as it may help ease their anxiety</li><li>• Children will observe adults' behaviours and emotions as cues for how to manage their own emotions</li></ul>

## FOR OLDER ADULTS

For older adults in isolation or with cognitive decline/dementia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide practical and emotional support through informal networks (families) and health professionals</li><li>• This seeks to decrease anxiety, anger, stress, and agitation</li></ul>
If you have an underlying health condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure to have access to medications</li><li>• Activate social contacts to provide you with assistance if needed</li></ul>
Communicate simple facts about COVID-19 and how to reduce risk of infection in older adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide instructions that are clear, concise, and respectful</li><li>• Be patient, and repeat information when necessary</li></ul>

## MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stay connected</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set limits around news and social media</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make time to unwind</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seek accurate information from credible sources*</li></ul>

**\*For accurate information please see:  
WHO, CDC, and Haliburton Highland Mental Health Services  
[bigwhitewall.ca](http://bigwhitewall.ca)**