

## **Educators' Guide to Managing Stress and Emotional Health During COVID19 Crisis** (Please see helpful resources and links at end of guide)

We all react differently to stressful situations and with the changes impacting our daily lives as a result of this infectious disease breakout, some **typical reactions to stress may include:**

### **Anxiety, worry or fear related to:**

- The uncertainty regarding the impact of the crisis on your daily life and what tomorrow may look like
- Your own health status and the health status of your family and loved ones
- The health status of your students, families and co-workers
- Employment uncertainty for friends and family
- Changes in the way you currently perform your job duties
- The challenges faced to secure groceries and necessities
- Feeling cut off from the world and loved ones
- Receiving too much or not enough information regarding new work expectations, how to support students in this new learning environment, how long this is going last, general COVID-19 information, current status in New Mexico, status of the nation, and status of the world related to the crisis.

### **Anger/frustration/resentment with:**

- The restrictions and life changes required during the crisis
- Others' negligence leading to exposure of self or others
- The inability to support students, families and colleagues in the way you are accustomed
- The impact this has had on your own children's education and routine
- Feeling stuck or trapped
- Not having any time for self, over exposure to kids, family, partner, etc.
- Feeling like there has been a total loss of control of your life

### **Depression/sadness from**

- Feeling bored and isolated
- Eating and/or drinking alcohol/drugs excessively

- Sleeping more than usual/difficulty sleeping
- Loss of interest in activities you could engage in
- Feelings of hopelessness and dread
- A traumatic response to the situation such as intrusive distressing
- Memories, flashbacks, nightmares, thoughts and mood swings, being easily startled or jumpy

**Ambivalence/Uncertainty from**

- Not having any strong feelings about the situation
- Avoiding conversations about the crisis and related news
- Feeling helpless due to the inability to access your most vulnerable students

**\*If you or someone you know is experiencing any of these reactions for 2-4 weeks or more, contact a health care professional or one of the resources at the end of this guide.**

**How to cope with stressors related to COVID-19**

**Stay connected (while observing social distancing):**

- To family and friends
- To students, colleagues and families
- To professional outlets and supports
- Other supports that existed prior to the crisis; e.g. religious connections, support groups, organizations
- Stay informed without spending too much time on crisis-related news and social media

**Practical ways to promote your own coping and relaxation:**

- Take frequent breaks from work with deep breathes, stretching, meditation, prayer or other activities you enjoy
- Acknowledge and share with others what you are experiencing by sharing feelings with friends, family or other supports
- Work to maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking, start a gratitude journal keeping note of all you are grateful for
- Pick up an old hobby or learn something new, craft, bake, knit paint, repair

something, do puzzles, play games, finish a project, read

**Resources:**

- Coping toolkit for adults and youth  
<https://www.bcbe.org/cms/lib/AL01901374/Centricity/Domain/1760/Coping%20Skills%20Toolkit.pdf>
  
- Psychological first aid- the national child traumatic stress network (NCTSN)
  - school administrator resources
  - self care
  - connection with others for adults and students
  - when terrible things happen for adults and students
  - helping your family cope
  - tips for relaxation<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/psychological-first-aid-school-pfa-s-field-operations-guide>
  
- Social emotional learning resources for educators, parents and leaders  
<https://casel.org/covid-resources/>
  
- Contact your primary care provider to get info about behavioral health services or/and your districts Employee Assistance Program if that is available
  
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255), if you are or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed with emotions such as, sadness, depression, anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others
  
- New Mexico Access and Crisis Line (NMCAL) 855-NMCRISIS (662-7474) 24/7 Mental Health line and response to COVID- 19 concerns.
  
- Contact any support systems already in place, support groups, clergy, Friends, counselor