

Maintaining Mental Wellness

During times like this it is important to acknowledge the prevalence of mental health disabilities and how the impacts of COVID-19 as well as an international war on racism (the fight for justice for the Black community) can impact an individual's mental wellbeing. It is vital for people to be provided with tools and information to aid them in maintaining wellness during this time of crisis; as people's fear, anxiety, trauma responses, exhaustion, and feelings of being overwhelmed can be at an all-time high.

Below here are some tools to support individuals in caring for themselves as well as their friends and loved ones to decrease the development and/or the impact of distress.

GENERAL TOOLS FOR MENTAL WELLNESS

- Get a Therapist/Spiritual Director/Coach/Sponsor
- Make time for breaks
- Create quiet space
- Limit your work hours
- Set and maintain boundaries
- Build a support base at work and at home
- Ask for help/ communicate your needs
- Increase your self-awareness
- Acknowledge powerlessness
- Create a self-care plan

HOW TO INTEGRATE SELF-CARE

1. **Breath:** Deep, long inhales followed by deep, long exhales. Trauma activates our nervous system and deep breathing calms our nervous system, helping us to relax so it's great to rely on in times of stress. It also increases the amount of oxygen to the brain, allowing us to focus and feel grounded.
2. **Do not apologize:** It is important to acknowledge our experiences and what happens to us as it is vital to the journey of healing. Do not apologize for being impacted or affected by the trauma of experiencing racism.

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By Tyesha McCool-Riley

Mental Health Program Specialist, The Office of Community and Civic Life

3. **Set the menu:** What we eat can have a huge impact on how we feel. Be mindful of what you are feeding your body.
4. **Treat yourself:** Just take some time out each to do a little something for you that will make you smile. This could be as simple as having a long shower/ bath or having a facial at home.
5. **Honor Your Emotions:** Feelings are okay, do not stuff and avoid what you are feeling. Practice emotional intelligence enables us to be aware of what we are feeling; to manage what we are feeling; and to express our emotions in a healthy manner. Good questions to consider: What am I feeling? Can I identify what caused this feeling? How do I feel about this emotion? How can I express what I am feeling? What coping strategies can I use to cope?
6. **Social Detox:** Think about switching off your social media or stepping away from certain activities for a while to limit exposure to trauma, misinformation, hysteria, and insensitivity.
7. **Socialize:** During this time of isolation finding ways to engage with others without risking your health and wellbeing is important. While some can choose to detox from social media; social media could be a way of connecting with others. Other things such as attending virtual events, skyping, video chatting, calling, texting can be used to substitute face to face interactions. Connecting with your community can be a source of strength and empowerment.
8. **Move:** Try and include 30 minutes of regular exercise every single day. During this time creating space in your home for exercise, yoga or other forms of movement is a good idea. Additionally, going for a nice stroll around your neighborhood is an option.
9. **Hydrate:** Hydrating your body throughout the day. Water helps with digestion, circulation, absorption of nutrients and detoxification. When our bodies feel well, it positively impacts our mental wellness.
10. **Shut eye:** Sleep plays a vital role in our mental and physical health. Make sure you are getting adequate sleep each night.
11. **Embrace the light:** Go outside. Weather permitting do some yard work, go for a jog or walk, or sit on the porch/patio. Take time to be out in the elements to break the monotony of being cooped up in the house.
12. **Become Involved:** If it feels safe to do so (mentally, emotionally, spiritually), it might be helpful to work through race-related stress by connecting with organizations and other avenues to become involved in activism, advocacy, educating yourself, healing efforts etc.

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Mental Health Program Specialist, The Office of Community and Civic Life

13. **Do what makes you happy:** This is a personal one. Try to do something special for yourself. Typically, that might mean buying that new pair of shoes you've been thinking about for ages; going to see an art exhibition; taking yourself out to lunch; trying something new like a dance or yoga class.

During this time the following are good alternatives:

Meditate/pray

Practice gratitude

Clean

Listen to audio books

Take a bath

Read a book

Binge watch a show

Have a dance party

Play games

Relax

Make community connections

Try making that new recipe(s)

Do arts and crafts

Reach out and support others

TENDING TO YOUR THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS

Coping strategies help facilitate a person's ability to handle a stressful experience in an effort to prevent the development of intense distress or even crises.

Listed below are some resources, strategies, and practical tools to assist you in moments of stress to help you feel calmer, more motivated, more focused, able to concentrate, and in control.

[Coping](#)

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Mental Health Program Specialist, The Office of Community and Civic Life

[Mindfulness](#)

[Grounding](#)

[Self care](#)

[Emotional Intelligence](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The tools and strategies shared today are not all you may need to stay centered and thrive. It's important to know that there are resources we can access to support ourselves and each other through tough times.

- **EAP (City employees):** 1-800-433-2320 or 503-980-1777
- **Call to Safety:** If you are an adult and worried about your safety at home, 888-235-5333. Interpretation line available.
- **Proyecto Unica:** Spanish version of Call to Safety, 503-232-4448
- **DHS Hotline** (Oregon Department of Human Services) If you are worried about the safety of a child, 855-503-7233. Interpretation services available.
- **Multnomah County Crisis Services:** Call Center/Crisis Line, 503-988-4888 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Interpretation services available.
- **Kaiser Crisis Line:** Available if you have Kaiser insurance, 503-331-6425
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** English, 800-273-8255; Spanish, 800-628-9454 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Interpretation services available.
- **Oregon Youth line:** For youth to connect with other youth, text "Teen2Teen" to 839863 to instantly text with another person. Interpretation services available.
- **BIPOC Therapists Nationally:** https://www.justdavia.com/blog/directories-for-therapistsofcolor?fbclid=IwAR3r5yV4Fa15CPYBYHXpkn07cNFL_XrXFkFEJ3sWZES82ZE0f-chByRoInG You're also able to search for therapists within in your health insurance network if that's most useful and search based on the modality of work (marriage, family counseling, etc.)
- **Trevor Project:** Supporting LGBTQiA+ youth. Text "START" to 678678 or call TrevorLifeLine, 1-866-488-7386
- **Trans Lifeline:** Supporting trans community members, call 877-565-8860
- **The Senior Loneliness Line:** (503) 200-1633 or 800-282-7035 (<http://seniorlonelinessline.org/>)

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