



## School-Based Crisis Prevention Team

### COVID 19 Mental Health

March 2020



#### **Managing mental health during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak**

*Information provided in this document are in accordance to CDC guidelines.*

#### **Facts about who is most at risk?**

The risk of most people becoming seriously ill from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is thought to be low; however older adults and individuals with underlying health conditions and compromised immune systems are at greater risk of severe illness. We can help keep those at greatest risk safe by continuing to practice social distancing.

#### **Hand washing:**

Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds (Sing “Happy Birthday” song). Wash before touching your eyes, nose or mouth; after coughing or sneezing; after using the bathroom and before preparing meals or eating.

#### **Navigating day-to-day life during virus outbreak**

#### **Stay connected while at home:**

- Use email, text messages, or make a phone call to individuals in your support system. Make use of Face-Time, Duo, or other technology to chat with your friends and family when you want to see faces.
- Maintain healthy relationships and build strong support systems by sharing your feelings and/or concerns with family and friends.

#### **Make time for yourself:**

- Find a quiet space at home (yes even the bathroom counts).
- Take breaks from the media and watch a movie, read a book, journal, start a project.
- Remember the things that you enjoy like cooking, baking, movies, games, art, hobbies. Do that one thing that you never seem to have time for.
- Try to eat healthy well-balanced meals, get exercise regularly and get plenty of sleep.

#### **Avoid unnecessary appointments:**

- If it is not an emergency, stay home as much as you can! This way you keep yourself safe and healthy and helps “flatten the curve” for our communities. We all need to pitch in to try and prevent the spread of the virus.

#### **Keep a safe 6 feet distance away from others in public:**

- Be friendly and show acknowledgement by waving hello. (Give the person on line at the supermarket some space.)
- Avoid gatherings of 10 people or greater.

#### **Take a walk:**

- Going outside for a walk is healthy and encouraged, just remember to maintain your 6ft distance. It’s okay to sit on the porch or get outside to get some air and feel the sun.

#### **Take breaks from news sources and social media:**

- Excessive exposure can be upsetting and may increase stress.

### **When do I need support?**

The uncertainty of the Coronavirus can cause overwhelming fear and anxiety in adults and children. Individuals who may become more overwhelmed by the stress of a crisis are:

- The elderly and individuals with chronic illnesses are at higher risk for acquiring the virus.
- Children and teens – the structure of their school day and social lives have been interrupted.
- Healthcare professionals who are assisting with all things related to COVID-19, like first responders including doctors, nurses, and mental health providers.
- Individuals who already have mental health conditions including substance abuse.
- Individuals with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment plans and monitor for any new symptoms.

### **Look out for these signs of increased distress and/or anxiety:**

- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety, or fear
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and/or upsetting thoughts and images
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Anger, increased irritability, or short-temper
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

### **Other Supportive Tips:**

- Maintain contact with your school supports.
- Make a plan for yourself and your new home-schooled students.
- Continue to keep a positive mindset; allow opportunities for laughter. It's okay to be silly and have fun.
- Obtain a 90-day medication supply if possible.

### **For more information about COVID-19:**

- The Schenectady City School District webpage is updated regularly.
- Call New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus Hotline 24/7 at 1-888-364-3065 and/or visit: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/share-facts.html>

*During this stressful situation, uncertainty and fear of the unknown can be overwhelming. Managing your own stress and anxiety is important for you, your loved ones, and your community. Coping with our stressors will make our community stronger.*