

Caring for Yourself and Your Loved Ones with Mental Illness



DURING A PANDEMIC

59%

of Americans believe that COVID-19 is having a serious impact on their day-to-day lives*

36%

reported that COVID-19 is having a serious impact on their mental health*



*Polling data from the American Psychiatric Association

CARING FOR YOURSELF

- Stay informed with reliable sources
- Limit media consumption
- Share your fears with others and stay socially connected
- If you work from home, create boundaries around worktime
- Rotate in-home responsibilities
- Exercise and practice calming, mindfulness, and relaxation techniques

For your loved one with a mental illness, the amount of distress during a pandemic can exacerbate already existing symptoms and increase:

- Paranoia
- Delusions
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Hallucinations
- Cognitive Impairments
- Disorganization

HOW TO SUPPORT AN INDIVIDUAL WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

- Make sure they have proper information and are not misinformed.
- Consider moving an isolated person back into your home if it is safe and possible to do so.
- Increase your support network.
- Ensure your loved one has remote access to mental healthcare including phone & telehealth. Ask to be included on some of the meetings if possible.
- Encourage your loved one to stay on medication.
- Ask physicians to give the maximum safe number of pills that are covered by insurance - don't wait until the last day for pills!
- Stress the importance of sleep.
- Make sure firearms are removed or strongly secured.
- Minimize the amount of alcohol, marijuana, and other substances in the home.
- Encourage the use of online support groups.
- Know how to access mental health crisis services if necessary.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN MARYLAND, CONTACT THE MARYLAND HELPLINE AT 2-1-1 AND PRESS 1, OR TEXT YOUR ZIPCODE TO 898-211

Data from "Coping in the Time of Pandemic: Caring for Yourself and Your Loved Ones with Mental Illness" by Dr. Mark Komrad & Dr. Patti Friedman

Find more Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources at http://namimd.org/coronavirus_resources



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www.namimd.org



NAMI Maryland

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