

# SUPPORTING SBISD

Taking Care of Your **Behavioral Health**

**When you take care of your behavioral health, you'll have less anxiety, improved moods, reduced risk of depression, and a greater sense of calm and inner peace.**



## What is behavioral health?

**Behavioral health** is the scientific study of the emotions, behaviors, and biology relating to a person's mental well-being. Behavioral health determines an individual's ability to function in everyday life and their concept of self. Behavioral health focuses on a person's overall well-being.

A person struggling with his or her behavioral health may face stress, depression and/or anxiety, based on how they effectively or ineffectively manage life's circumstances.

Although behavioral health and mental health are used interchangeably, behavioral health is distinguishably different. Mental health focuses on a person's psychological state based on specific factors, whereas behavioral health looks at how behavior influences someone's health -- both mental and physical. Behavioral health is what people see when someone is encountering psychological and physical health challenges.

Some examples of risky health behaviors include smoking, drinking alcohol, drug use, poor diets, and sedentary lifestyles (leading to obesity and health concerns). Some health-enhancing behaviors include adequate hours of sleep, attention to a healthy diet, proper exercise, stress-relieving activities, and seeking mental health supports during times of stress and anxiety.

## Keeping an eye on BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

### Look Out for Common Signs of Distress

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

# UNDERSTANDING

Social Distancing, Quarantine and Isolation during an infectious disease outbreak

## What Is Social Distancing?

Social distancing is a way to keep people from interacting closely or frequently enough to spread an infectious disease. Schools and other gathering places such as movie theaters may close, and sporting events and religious services may be cancelled.

## What Is Quarantine?

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. It lasts long enough to ensure the person has not contracted an infectious disease.

## What Is Isolation?

Isolation prevents the spread of an infectious disease by separating people who are sick from those who are not. It lasts as long as the disease is contagious.

**Although each of the actions are necessary to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the safety of those who have been affected, adhering to these precautions can be stressful.**

**It is important to seek out ways to cope with the stress during an outbreak.**



## Resources to learn more about COVID-19:

### **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

<https://bit.ly/2URebuY>

### **CDC: Stress and Coping**

<https://bit.ly/39Q3Cwx>

### **Kids Health.org: COVID Toolkit for Families**

<https://bit.ly/2V3pS0k>

### **The World Health Organization (WHO)**

<https://www.who.int>

### **CDC: Talking to Kids About COVID-19**

<https://bit.ly/2V9j3L1>

### **PBS News Hour: 10 Tips for Talking to Your Kids About COVID-19**

<https://to.pbs.org/39Ovst6>

### **Child Mind Institute: Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus**

<https://bit.ly/2Rj8rIk>



## COPING WITH STRESS

During a COVID-19 Outbreak

### Recommendations to reduce stress:

#### **Stay informed**

Keep updated about what is happening with the outbreak and additional recommendations by getting information from credible media outlets, local public health authorities, and updates from public health websites (e.g., CDC).

#### **Find support**

Seek support and continued connections from friends and family by talking to them on the telephone, texting, or communicating through email or social media.

#### **Communicate**

Focus on parent/student/school communication. Schools may have additional ways to stay in contact with educators and classmates.

#### **Limit exposure to media**

Although you need to stay informed, minimize exposure to media outlets or social media that might promote fear or panic. Be particularly aware of (and limit) how much media coverage or social media time your children are exposed to about the outbreak.

#### **Keep perspective**

E-mail and texting may be the best ways to stay in contact with others during an outbreak, but be mindful that the Internet may have the most sensational media coverage, which could potentially spread rumors.

**Even if your family is prepared, an outbreak can be very stressful.**

#### **Talk to your children**

Check in regularly with your children about what they have viewed on the Internet and clarify any misinformation. Focus on supporting children by encouraging questions and helping them understand the current situation. Talk about their feelings and validate them.

#### **Express your feelings**

Help your children find positive ways to express their feelings through drawing or other activities.

#### **Provide clarity**

Clarify misinformation or misunderstandings about how the virus is spread and explain that not every respiratory disease or illness with similar symptoms is COVID-19.

#### **Provide comfort**

Provide comfort and a bit of extra patience, because everyone can encounter stress during times of change.

#### **Check in**

Check back in with your children on a regular basis or when the situation changes.



## Seeking support and additional help

You may experience serious distress when you hear about an infectious disease outbreak, even if you are at little or no risk of getting sick.

**If you or someone you know shows signs of stress as outlined in this document for several days or weeks, get help.**

Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline right away if you or someone you know threatens to hurt or kill him - or herself or someone else, or talks or writes about death, dying, or suicide.

If you notice these signs in your own behavior, don't hesitate to seek support or additional help.

- **Contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text [TalkWithUs to 66746](https://www.samhsa.gov/2019/08/20/2019-08-20-01) (TTY 1-800-846-8517)**
- **Call 911**

### PROVIDED BY SBISD COUNSELING SERVICES

Information for this newsletter was sourced from the following organizations:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.org](https://www.cdc.org)  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, [www.samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)