



COVID-19 Support for You and Your Family

Help is just a phone call away at 800.383.1908, or through the VITAL WorkLife App. Contacting VITAL WorkLife is easy, and we can assure fast response times for you and your family members. We are here to support you during this difficult time.

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and Your VITAL WorkLife Resources

By Mitchell Best, CEO

We are prepared to support members and their families who may be experiencing higher levels of stress and anxiety as a result of COVID-19. Our approach in working with those struggling with these emotions is to encourage them to:

- Be informed,
- Help them gain and retain perspective,
- Equip them with tools to manage stress and cultivate health and resiliency and
- Encourage them to seek additional support when needed.



Coronavirus Disease: Staying Informed While Keeping Perspective

As COVID-19 has grown into a worldwide pandemic, ongoing news reports about its spread may give rise to feelings of stress, anxiety and fear of the future in some people. Such responses are understandable, given the disease's fast rate of infection and severity. For those individuals with family and friends in affected areas or who work in healthcare settings, these feelings may be more intense.

Working with VITAL WorkLife to help manage your fear and anxiety around the spread of the disease can start with getting information about the facts and realities of COVID-19, as well as getting the support you need to develop resiliency during times of stress, and to avoid fixating on the worst-case scenario.

What is COVID-19?

According to the CDC, COVID-19 virus is a respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus that was first detected in China. The severity of symptoms has ranged from mild to severe illness and for some death. Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath and may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. According to the CDC, the following list includes emergency warning signs for COVID-19, if you are experiencing any of these seek medical attention immediately, those include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Constant pain or pressure in chest
- Bluish color in the lips or face

Note: this list is not all inclusive. If you are experiencing any severe or concerning symptoms, contact your medical provider.

How is COVID-19 transmitted?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease; the best way to prevent the spread of illness is to avoid exposure. Coronavirus is spread typically from person-to-person who are either within 6 feet of one another and/or through respiratory droplets produced from an infected person when they cough or sneeze, according to the CDC.

Protecting Yourself and Others

First and foremost, we recommend you follow rules outlined by your state in relation to shelter-in-place and stay-at-home orders to slow the spread of COVID-19, to protect yourself and others.

Ways to protect yourself:

- Wash your hands often
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid close contact with others –especially those who are sick; put distance between yourself and others

Ways to protect others:

- Practice [social distancing](#) to slow the spread of COVID-19
- Stay home if you are sick; avoid visiting those in “at-risk” categories
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze—and immediately wash your hands after
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surface areas daily

What You Can Do:

- **Keep things in perspective.** Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to upsetting media coverage. Although you'll want to keep informed, remember to take a break from watching the news and focus on the things that are positive in your life and things you can control.
- **Get the facts.** Gather information that will help you accurately determine risks so that you can take reasonable precautions, if appropriate. Find a credible source you can trust such as your physician, a local or state public health agency or national and international resources such as the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#) and the [World Health Organization](#). If you work in healthcare, be sure to stay informed of and follow all safety protocols outlined by your employer. If you have questions or concerns, take them to your supervisor or human resources department.
- **Stay healthy.** A healthy lifestyle—including proper diet and exercise—is your best defense against any threat. Adopting hygienic habits such as washing your hands regularly will also minimize your exposure to all types of germs and disease sources. Eat healthy, avoid alcohol and drugs and take a walk or exercise. A healthy body can have a positive impact on your thoughts and emotions.
- **Seek additional help from VITAL WorkLife.** Individuals who feel an overwhelming nervousness, a lingering sadness or other prolonged reaction that adversely affects their life, work or relationships should consult with a trained and experienced mental health professional through VITAL WorkLife. Our licensed behavioral health consultants can help you deal with stress and anxiety and are available to you anytime, day or night. Here is how your VITAL WorkLife EAP can support you during the COVID-19 crisis:
 - **Telephonic in-the-moment support**, available anytime, day or night.
 - **Telehealth:** video and telephonic counseling sessions available.
 - **Nurse Peer Coaching** and **Educator Peer Coaching** – talk with an external coach, a peer, who has had similar experiences and can help you navigate stress.
 - **Member Website** resources for you and your family members:
<https://www.vitalworklife.com/member-login/>

- **VITAL WorkLife App** assessments to evaluate your well being, links to more information about your resources, Insights and our COVID-19 Resources.
- **COVID-19 Resources**: Internal and external resources to provide current and reputable information.

Recommendations for Medical Professionals

Those responding to COVID-19 on the front lines, medical professionals in hospitals and healthcare clinics, may be experiencing a unique set of stressors, which can take an emotional toll on you and your family. According to the CDC, there are things you can do to reduce secondary traumatic stress (STS) reactions:

- Be aware of the impact STS may have on anyone helping families after a traumatic event
- Learn the symptoms, those being, physical fatigue/illness, mental fear, withdrawal and guilt
- Give you and your family time to recover after responding to the pandemic
- Set aside time to engage in self-care activities that you enjoy such as reading or exercising
- Ask for help—speak to a counselor or peer coach from VITAL WorkLife, someone who can help walk you through these feelings of distress

We Can Help

Contact VITAL WorkLife at **800.383.1908** or through the **VITAL WorkLife App** to access your resources today.

Sources:

How to Protect Yourself: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

How it Spreads: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/transmission.html>

Manage Anxiety and Stress: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

Information for Healthcare Professionals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/index.html>

If you are at Higher Risk: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>