

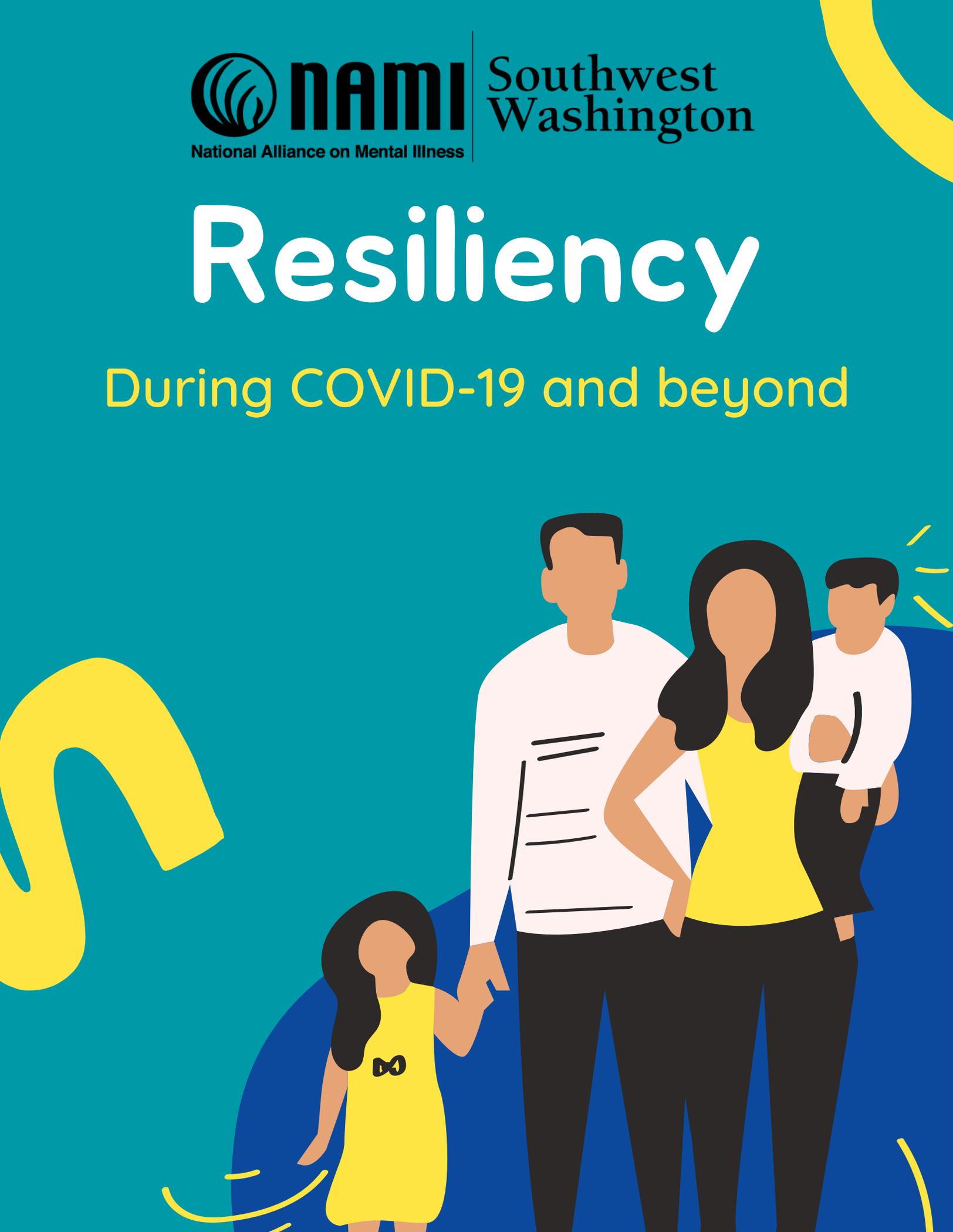


**nami**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

Southwest  
Washington

# Resiliency

During COVID-19 and beyond





NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, of Southwest Washington (NAMI SW WA) is dedicated to helping all people affected by mental illness through education, support, awareness, and advocacy.

Our service area is Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties in Washington State with an office in Vancouver.

Through our mission, we provide unique mental health services that are unavailable or inaccessible elsewhere for individuals and families affected by mental health issues through education, support, and advocacy.

We hold Support Groups and educational courses for individuals and their family members affected by mental illness, either diagnosed or not.

#### **Support:**

Family Support Group, for adults who have a loved one living with a mental health disorder or issues.

Connection Recovery Support Group, for adults living with a mental health disorder. As of 2020, we have support groups for women, co-ed, and co-occurring substance abuse.

Social Groups, for adults to socialize through writing or art without having to talk about mental illness.

#### **Education:**

Family-to-Family, for adults who have a loved one living with a mental health disorder or issues. The course is 8 weeks long, taught by peers who are family members themselves.

Peer-to-Peer, for adults living with a mental health disorder who want to learn more about recovery. The course is 8 weeks long, taught by peers who have a mental disorder themselves.

Basics, for parents and caregivers of children (under 18) who have a mental health diagnosis or issues. The course is 6 weeks long, taught by peers who have children living with mental health issues.

#### **Advocacy and Awareness:**

StigmaFree Company, a presentation for companies and organizations to learn strategies and skills to becoming stigma free and supporting their employees.

Ending the Silence, a presentation for middle- and high-school students about mental illness, suicide, and how to get help for themselves or a friend.

SEE ME/In Our Own Voice, a presentation about mental health disorders and a story from an individual or family member about their mental health journey.

# The Resilient Inventor



**“I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”  
~Thomas Edison, American Inventor**

Thomas Edison holds more than 1,000 patents for his inventions. Legend has it that it took him thousands of designs and prototypes of the lightbulb before he finally got it right on just that one invention. There are countless examples of how he tried and failed in his career.

It is hard to imagine what our world would be like if Edison had given up after his first few failures. His resilience gave the world some of the most amazing inventions of the early 20th century, such as the phonograph, the telegraph and the motion picture.

His inspiring story forces us to look at our own lives—do we have the resilience we need to overcome our challenges? Or do we let our failures derail our dreams? And what could we accomplish if we had the strength not to give up?

# What is Resilience?

Resilience is our ability to adapt or bounce back when things don't go as planned. Resilience is not about being without any problems, rather it is learning to deal with problems by using tools and skills to stay strong and deal with problems as they come up.

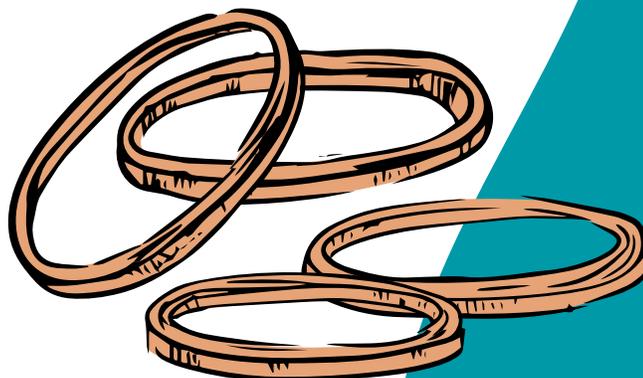
Resilient people do not dwell on their failures or wallow in the negative. They learn from their experiences or mistakes and move forward.



An easy way to think about resilience is to imagine a rubber band.

The rubber band can be stretched with pressure and it returns to its original shape when the pressure is released. The return to original state is a demonstration of resilience. The rubber band is flexible and pliable, it can adapt to the pressure of being stretched.

It is true that rubber bands can be stretched to the point of breaking, but for this illustration, we will focus on the resilient nature of the band.



# Why is Resilience Important?

Resilience relates to how we view and react to adversity and stress.

In every person's life, there are times when things do not work out as planned, and failures happen. Being resilient means that when these failures happen, you will have the ability to bounce back and function effectively instead of being crushed by a failure.

Resilience gives you the resources and power to overcome life's setbacks and to continue moving forward with your life.



## What Does a Resilient Person Look Like?

- Resilient people tend to have a positive image of the future; they maintain a positive outlook and see brighter days ahead
- Resilient people have solid goals and a desire to achieve those goals
- Resilient people are empathetic and compassionate; they do not waste time worrying what others think of them
- Resilient people do not think of themselves as victims; they focus their time and energy on changing things that they have control over

Keep in mind that being resilient does not mean ignoring problems or pretending everything is “just fine, thank you.”

Resilient people have problems, sometimes lots of them.

Being resilient means they have learned how to view and relate to those problems differently and in more adaptive and positive ways.

# Trauma's Effect

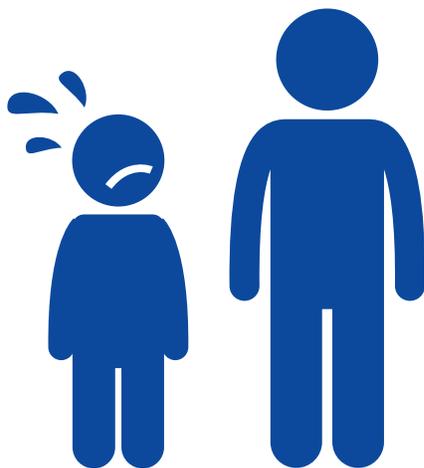
Trauma is defined as a psychologically distressing event that often involves an intense sense of fear, terror, or helplessness.

A research study investigated childhood trauma, also known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's). The results showed that people who experienced significant trauma as children had higher than average risk for experiencing poor physical health, mental health and other negative social consequences as adults.

The connection between ACE's and health outcomes is still being studied. It has been shown that the experience of trauma as a child may negatively impact the developing brain and body systems.

In fact, new research shows that trauma occurring at any time during the development of the prefrontal part of the brain can have these negative impacts. This part of the brain continues to develop until a person is in their mid-20's.

To learn more about ACE's, visit our website at [www.namiswwa.org/aces](http://www.namiswwa.org/aces)



# Building Blocks for Resilience

There are opportunities at every stage of life to remedy the negative effects of trauma and help people heal.

Resilience is the capacity of an individual to navigate their way to psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being.

Personal qualities such as confidence, social support, adaptability and purposefulness all work together to support resilience.



## RESILIENCE

Confidence	Purposefulness	Social Support	Adaptability
Having feelings of competence, effectiveness in coping with stressful situations and strong self-esteem are inherent to feeling resilient. The frequency with which individuals experience positive and negative emotions is also key.	Having a clear sense of purpose, clear values, drive and direction help individuals to persist and achieve in the face of setbacks.	Building good relationships with others and seeking support can help individuals overcome adverse situations, rather than trying to cope on their own.	Flexibility and adapting to changing situations which are beyond our control are essential to maintaining resilience. Resilient individuals are able to cope well with change and their recovery from its impact tends to be quicker.

# Resiliency During COVID-19

The coronavirus (COVID-19) has resulted in an unprecedented crisis that affects not only our physical health and daily lives, but also our mental health. To address these needs, NAMI is committed to providing credible information and resources to help people navigate through this crisis. In this guide, you will find answers to questions about how to manage anxiety during this difficult time.

Throughout our 40-year history, NAMI has fought stigma and discrimination that marginalizes people with mental illness and poses barriers to their well-being. Today, we continue that proud tradition and stand in solidarity with those communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and Asian-American communities whose members have been subjected to unjust hostility in the wake of the pandemic.

In the pursuit of our mission, NAMI will continue disseminating fact-based information and dispelling myths. And most importantly — we remain committed to serving all.



# Resources

Equip yourself with information from credible, reputable sources.

The Centers For Disease Control And Prevention (CDC) offers information and frequent updates on COVID-19's spread, severity, risk assessment, etc. Subscribe to the CDC's email and text message service for immediate updates.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the leading international public health organization. They direct global health responses and offer resources on COVID-19. They also provide many of their resources in a variety of languages. They have resources mental health and psychosocial considerations for various groups during COVID-19 outbreak, including caregivers of children and health care workers.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has extensive research-based information on COVID-19. Here are the NIH director's recommendations about physical (social) distancing.

The League Of United Latin American Citizens, an organization dedicated to advocating for Latinxs in the United States, has a FAQ guide (En Español) about COVID-19.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) also offers COVID-19 resources. They also have tips for social distancing, quarantine, and isolation during an infectious disease outbreak.

Mental Health America (MHA) also offers COVID-19 resources. They also have regular webinars about COVID-19 and mental health.

For the full resource list, visit [www.nami.org/covid-19-guide](http://www.nami.org/covid-19-guide).

# Dealing with Stress and Anxiety Because of COVID-19

It's common to feel stressed or anxious during this time. It may be especially hard for people who already manage feelings of anxiety or emotional distress. For example, for those of us with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), public health recommendations about contamination and hand washing may make it more difficult to manage our symptoms.

Recognizing how you're feeling can help you care for yourself, manage your stress and cope with difficult situations. Even when you don't have full control of a situation, there are things you can do.

Here are some ways to stay informed, take action, maintain healthy social connections and find resources for support.



## Manage how you consume information

Be selective about how you consume news. It's generally a good idea to stay engaged and informed. Having some limits on your news consumption can help:

- Watching or listening to the same news constantly can increase stress. Reading can be an easier medium to control how much and what kind of information you're absorbing.
- Set limits on when and for how long you consume news and information, including through social media. It may help you to choose a couple of 15-minute blocks each day when you will check news/social media and limit your news consumption to that time.
- False information spreads very easily on social media and can have serious consequences for individual and public health. Always verify sources and make sure they are reputable, especially before sharing anything.

# Dealing with Stress and Anxiety Because of COVID-19

Follow healthy daily routines as much as possible

Your daily habits and routines can help you feel more in control of your own well-being.

Even simple actions can make a difference:

- Make your bed
- Get dressed
- Connect with loved ones
- Move your body
- Make time for breaks; If possible, take regular short breaks during work or between shifts. During these breaks, go outside and engage in physical activity if you can.
- Practice good hygiene, especially by cleaning your hands
- Prioritize sleep. Here are some [recommendations for getting good sleep](#).
- Getting enough regular sleep is critical for your immune system. Eat nutritious food as much as possible, especially fruits and vegetables



## Do meaningful things with your free time

When you can, do things that you enjoy and that help you relax.

- Read a book/listen to an audiobook. Many public libraries' websites offer free audiobooks.
- Learn a new skill
- Create art — draw, build something, etc.
- Journal or write
- Play puzzles or games
- Take an online course — various free online courses available
- Do tasks around your home — organize, craft, garden, rearrange your living space
- Cook something new with ingredients you have at home

# Dealing with Stress and Anxiety Because of COVID-19

## Take care of yourself through exercise and movement

If you're staying home, you may be less physically active than usual. It's important to keep movement as part of your daily life, whether it's exercise or light movement like stretching and making sure you're not sitting down too long.

Exercise is a great way to care for your body. It is a powerful way to improve both your physical and mental health. Research suggests that when we exercise, our brain releases chemicals that help us better manage stress and anxiety.

There are many different ways to exercise. Many of them are free, don't require any equipment and can be done at home. Most people can find an exercise routine that fits their needs and abilities. If you don't typically exercise or have health concerns, you may want to talk with your primary care provider before starting a new activity.

Some ideas for how to move more:

- Walk
- Stretch
- Dance
- Do yoga
- Do cardiovascular exercise. Research suggests this helps with anxiety and sleep. If you have concerns about balance or joint health, ask your provider about low-impact cardio you can do at home.
- Search for free exercise videos on the web (yoga, dance exercises, pilates, cardio, HIIT, etc.)



# Dealing with Stress and Anxiety Because of COVID-19

Practice relaxing in the present moment

Mindfulness is a way of practicing awareness that can reduce your stress. It involves focusing your attention on the present moment and accepting it without judgment. It may also help people manage some mental health symptoms.

There are lots of online resources about mindfulness, meditation, breathing exercises and more. Some organizations, including yoga studios, offer free classes online as well. Grounding exercises can help you notice the sights, sounds, smells and sensations around you rather than being absorbed in your thoughts.

## Meditation

There are many types of meditation, but in general, they involve finding a quiet, comfortable place where you can observe your thoughts and focus on your breath. Meditation can help you feel calmer and more relaxed.

According to the National Institutes of Health, “some research suggests that practicing meditation may reduce blood pressure, symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety and depression, and insomnia.”

Breathing exercises can help calm your body and your mind. These exercises often involve controlling and slowing your breath. They may be especially helpful in managing feelings of anxiety and panic. Types of breathing exercises include diaphragmatic breathing and pursed lip breathing.



# Dealing with Stress and Anxiety Because of COVID-19

**Stay connected with others and maintain your social networks**

Physical distancing (also called social distancing) can change how you usually interact with people you care about. Doing this is essential to lessening the impact of COVID-19. There are many ways you can build a feeling of connection, even if you can't see people in person or go places you usually would:

- Make sure you have the phone numbers and emails of close friends and family
- Stay connected via phone, email, social media and video calls
- Offer to help others if you can
- Ask for help when you need it
- Share how you're feeling with people you trust
- Regularly call, text or email with family and friends who may have more limited social contact — older Americans, those with disabilities, those who live alone, those who are quarantined or at high risk because of chronic health conditions
- If talking about COVID-19 is affecting your mental health, set boundaries with people about how much and when talk you about COVID-19. Balance this with other topics you'd usually discuss.
- If you are living with other people, communicate expectations about how to live well together while staying home
- Do virtual activities together
  - Plan virtual dinners and coffee breaks
  - Do at-home crafts and activities over a video call
  - Watch a virtual concert together
  - Read the same book or watch the same movie/tv show and talk about it
  - Play online multi-player video games
  - Join an online exercise class

# Isolation as an Influence in Communities of Color

In 2019, the Health Resources and Services Administration described a “loneliness epidemic” as an increasing societal health concern. A recent Cigna survey revealed nearly half of Americans always or sometimes feel alone (46%) or left out (47%). Close to 50 percent of the respondents stated loneliness plagued their daily lives, however, these numbers were reported prior to social isolation caused by COVID-19.

Cigna produced another report that identified Hispanic respondents (47.7%) and those who identify their race as “other” (47.2%) were loneliest, followed by Black/African American respondents (46.3%). People of Color are facing two life threatening epidemics as the world struggles with Coronavirus.

The importance of positive social connections and relationships on human survival are known in a general sense, but what happens when people are told to refrain from participating in the physical aspect of social interactions? Research shows the level of risk presented by social isolation is very similar in magnitude to that of obesity, smoking, lack of access to care and physical inactivity. Additionally, loneliness and social isolation are twice as harmful to physical and mental health as obesity.

One key component regarding the idea of family that is needed most in racialized communities, is the exact issue we are to refrain from currently: physical connectedness. Thus, while many groups of people may feel vulnerable during this pandemic, this is especially true for communities of color, including African American, Latinx, Asian American, Indigenous, and other racialized communities. Communities of color and immigrants experience higher levels of loneliness associated with social isolation because it is generally part of their culture to have very close-knit relationships with extended family members as they provide a sense of safety, security, and comfort.

# Maintaining Mental Health in Communities of Color

Families provide a place where communities of color can let their guard down, feel seen and heard and have their existence validated and celebrated. It is due to this familial connectedness that current social isolation policies are affecting many POC in an unforeseen manner. Diverse communities, even those from younger generations who see their identity as an inter-section of many identities such as being multiracial, gendered and minoritized, find support in groups that see and value them at the intersection of their multiple identities especially when race is a common denominator. Even with this multidimensional approach to identity and culture, stories still exist of racialized communities being left with feelings of longingness and helplessness.

To preserve mental health, it is essential to maintain a sense of purpose and belonging. It is also important to find inventive ways to connect with others virtually through Facetime, Zoom, Skype or WhatsApp. Do this by maintaining engagement with faith and cultural institutions in a virtual capacity for social support. Additionally, to maintain connectedness with family cook dinner in your respective kitchens and have a remote dinner together while taking turns telling your favorite family story and reminiscing about past events.

Engage in Dr. Sue Varma's 4 Ms of Mental Health: movement (exercising), meaningful engagement (connecting with other people), mastery (being creative), and mindfulness (deep breathing and being aware). Practicing this formula can bring peace of mind during stressful times. Lastly, make plans and remain hopeful because learning to cope with pandemic stress in a healthy way not only makes you stronger, but makes our community stronger.

# Dealing with Isolation and Loneliness Because of COVID-19

Being quarantined or isolated is difficult. While you may not have in-person access to support groups, mental health providers and other support systems, there are online resources that can help.

## Find support over the phone

A warmline is a confidential, non-crisis emotional support telephone hotline staffed by volunteers. To find a warmline that serves your area, visit the [NAMI Helpline Warmline Directory](#) in the NAMI Resource Library. In Clark County, call the CVAB Warmline at 360-903-2853, open every day from 4 PM - midnight.

## Explore online support communities

NAMI hosts online community discussion groups where people exchange support and encouragement. Create a free NAMI account to join one at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org).

- 7 cups: [7cups.com](http://7cups.com) - Free online chat for emotional support and counseling. Also offers fee-for service online therapy with a licensed mental health professional. Service/website also offered in languages other than English, including Spanish.
- 18percent: [18percent.org](http://18percent.org) - Free, peer-to-peer online support community for people experiencing a range of mental health issues. Offers online mental health resources, quizzes, news, “ask the therapist” and online support communities.
- Emotions Anonymous: [emotionsanonymous.org](http://emotionsanonymous.org) - Nonprofessional group focusing on emotional well-being in in-person and online weekly meetings.
- For Like Minds: [forlikeminds.com](http://forlikeminds.com) - Online mental health support network for people with or supporting someone with mental health conditions, substance use disorders or stressful life events.

# Dealing with Isolation and Loneliness Because of COVID-19

## Explore online support communities

- Supportgroups.com: [supportgroups.com/online](https://supportgroups.com/online) - Listings of online support groups.
- Support Group Central: [supportgroupscentral.com](https://supportgroupscentral.com) - Virtual support groups on various mental health conditions. Free or low-cost. Website also offered in languages other than English.
- The Tribe Wellness Community: [support.therapytribe.com](https://support.therapytribe.com) - Free, online peer support groups. Includes groups focused on addiction, anxiety, depression, HIV/AIDS, LGBT, marriage/family, OCD and teens.

## Connect to a spiritual or religious community

Connecting with a spiritual or religious community can be helpful to find strength and consolation in times of distress, loss, grief and bereavement. [Harvard Divinity School](#) has compiled some spiritual resources from their community.



## NAMI Southwest Washington Support Groups Online

All online support groups can be viewed and joined through [www.namiswwa.org/zoom](https://www.namiswwa.org/zoom)

- Family Support Group - for adults who have a loved one living with a mental health disorder or issues.
- Connection Recovery Support Group - for adults living with a mental health disorder. As of 2020, we have support groups for women, co-ed, and co-occurring substance abuse.
- Social Groups - for adults to socialize through writing or art without having to talk about mental illness.

# Reach out to Talk with Someone Right Now

If you need to talk with someone right now, there are always crisis lines available. Find your local crisis line by searching your county and the words "crisis line."

- Crisis Text Line: text "NAMI" to 741741 to chat with a trained crisis counselor. Free 24/7 text line for those in crisis (English only).
- SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline: call (800) 985-5990. Press 2 for Spanish-language support. Provides 24/7 crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call (800) 273-TALK (8255). If you or someone you know is in crisis — whether they are considering suicide or not — call the toll-free lifeline to speak with a trained crisis counselor 24/7.
- The Trevor Project Resources: Call (866) 488-7386, instant message a counselor on their website, or text "start" to 678678 24/7. The Trevor Project is a national organization offering support, including suicide prevention, for LGBTQ youth and their friends.
  - Trevorspace: online international peer-to-peer community.
  - Trevor Support Center: educational resources and FAQs.
- Trans Lifeline: Call (877) 565-8860 24/7.
  - Trans Lifeline is a trans-led organization that connects trans individuals to support, community and a variety of resources.
- Southwest Washington Crisis Line: 1-800-626-8137. Free 24/7 for those in crisis living in the Southwest Washington area.



# Staying Safe During Quarantine

While staying at home is critical to slowing the spread and severity of COVID-19, not everyone feels safe in their home. Various organizations can provide confidential support for people who feel unsafe or for people who are concerned about someone else's safety.

National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE(7233) has 24/7 confidential support for people experiencing domestic violence, seeking resources or information, or questioning unhealthy aspects of their relationship.

- Resources on saying safe during COVID-19
- Create a safety plan
- Get immediate support from the National Domestic Violence Hotline online through their website [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org).
  - Online chat if you are unable to speak aloud safely
  - Text: "LOVEIS" or "AMORES" (For Español) To 22522

RAINN has a 24/7 safe and confidential sexual assault hotline that connects individuals to a local service provider who can provide a variety of free resources.

- Hotline number: 800-656-HOPE (4673)
- Online chat

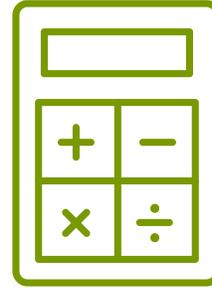


# Staying Resilient into the Future

## Assessing Current Resilience

You may already be more resilient than you think. This questionnaire will help you identify your sources of resilience and help you identify areas you may wish to work on improving. Rate how much you agree or disagree with each statement on a 0 - 4 scale.

- 4 - This statement is definitely true
- 3 - This statement is mostly true
- 2 - This statement is only partly true
- 1 - This statement is mostly false
- 0 - This statement is completely false



1. \_\_\_\_\_ I have supportive relationships in my life
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I can brainstorm other possible choices when confronted with a crisis
3. \_\_\_\_\_ At an emotional level, I accept change as a part of life
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I have goals and dreams for this year
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I take action on decisions
6. \_\_\_\_\_ I have hobbies or activities that express my creativity
7. \_\_\_\_\_ I have tried new activities in the last year
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I can list five personal strengths
9. \_\_\_\_\_ I have a strong sense that life is worth living
10. \_\_\_\_\_ I have self-care strategies for managing strong emotions
11. \_\_\_\_\_ I have positive self-talk messages
12. \_\_\_\_\_ I take care of myself regularly
13. \_\_\_\_\_ I am able to make meaning of suffering
14. \_\_\_\_\_ I have relationships of mutual support in my life
15. \_\_\_\_\_ I am able to choose from a number of options to solve problems
16. \_\_\_\_\_ I thrive on change
17. \_\_\_\_\_ I have well-defined goals
18. \_\_\_\_\_ I solve problems quickly
19. \_\_\_\_\_ I find my hobbies relaxing
20. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy trying new things
21. \_\_\_\_\_ I focus on my strengths
22. \_\_\_\_\_ Life is good
23. \_\_\_\_\_ I am able to express my feelings openly
24. \_\_\_\_\_ I have a positive view of myself
25. \_\_\_\_\_ Pain has shaped who I am

All the statements above were phrased positively. Individual answers of 3 or 4 would indicate you have strong resilience in that area. Lower scores indicate areas you might want to work on developing to improve your resilience.

# Improving Resilience

## 10 ways to improve your resilience



1. Make connections: Good relationships with family members, friends or others are important. Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based organizations or other local groups provides social support and can help with reclaiming hope.
2. Avoid seeing crisis as insurmountable problems: You cannot change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events. Try looking beyond the present to how future circumstances may be a little better once the crisis passes.
3. Accept that change is a part of living: Certain goals may no longer be attainable because of adverse situations. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can change.
4. Move toward your goals: Develop some realistic goals. Do something regularly—even if it seems like a small accomplishment—that enables you to move toward your goals. Ask yourself, “What is one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?”
5. Take decisive actions: Act on adverse situations as much as you can. Take decisive actions rather than emotionally detaching and wishing the problems and stresses would go away.
6. Look for opportunities for self-discovery: People often learn something and experience personal growth because of their struggles. Look for the lessons in the challenges you face—how will you come out stronger, wiser, and better able to appreciate life?
7. Nurture a positive view of yourself: Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.
8. Keep things in perspective: Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the situation in a broader context. Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.
9. Maintain a hopeful outlook: An optimistic outlook enables you to expect good things to happen in your life. Try visualizing what you want rather than worrying about what you fear.
10. Take care of yourself: Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body ready to deal with situations that require resilience.

# Build Your Resilience

## Take the Next Steps



Look over the answers from the self assessment. Find at least three items you rated as a 0 or 1 that you would like to work on.

Brainstorm ideas that may help you increase your resilience. Use the ideas from the 10 way to improve to help you come up with ideas.

**Resilience area I want to work on:**

**Ideas to increase resilience in this area:**



**Great job!**

You're on your way to becoming more resilient. Remember, change takes time. Having a plan helps speed things up, but being patient with yourself makes it a much better, more fulfilling experience.