



health

Department:
Health
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

stand up against stigma

No Health without
Mental Health



Covid-19 & Your Mental Health

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations like the COVID-19 crisis, depending on their background, personality, support system, and the community they live in. People with pre-existing mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. This is a brief guide to assist you with basic facts and information, and how to seek help if you need it. If you are unsure of anything – please make contact with a health professional.

There is no health without mental health

You are probably worried about having acquired the new coronavirus and you may have lots of questions on your mind right now. This may lead to stress, anxiety, depression, and difficulties adjusting to a new routine if you test positive. It is important to remember to take care of your mental health during this difficult time by boosting your resilience and your emotional wellbeing. Our mind and our body work together – so please take care of both!

Self isolation

If you test positive you are asked to “self-isolate” at home for at least 14 days. This means not leaving your house and not having any direct contact with other people at all. Do not go to work, school, or any public areas. It is your legal duty to stay at home to recover and prevent others from acquiring the virus. If you live in a house with other people, minimize your contact with others-wear a mask at all times, do not share utensils and wash your hands regularly.

Home recovery

Most people who test positive for Covid-19 will have only a mild illness and should recover at home. It is not a lifelong illness and most people recover after two weeks. You may have the typical symptoms: fever, cough and mild shortness of breath. Monitor your symptoms carefully. If your symptoms get worse, get immediate medical help. Avoid taking public transport to the facility – either use private transport (preferably with windows rolled-down) or call 10177 for emergency services for an ambulance if required.

Feelings you may experience

Common feelings you may experience during self-isolation or hospitalization include:

- **Denial:** Not believing you have the virus; thinking this must be a mistake
- **Confusion:** wondering how you got the virus, or what the future holds.
- **Fear:** feeling scared because of the uncertainty about Covid-19
- **Loneliness:** not having anyone to talk to, rely on, or confide in
- **Helpless:** feeling like there's nothing you can do to improve this situation
- **Anxiety:** worrying all the time; constant negative thinking; panic attacks
- **Sadness:** having a low mood, being tearful, feeling depressed.
- **Insomnia:** struggling to get a good night's sleep
- **Overeating or undereating:** changes in appetite; eating out of boredom
- **Anger:** feeling frustration, irritability, or aggression
- **Boredom:** running out of activities to keep yourself busy at home
- **Stigma:** feeling like people treat you negatively because you tested positive
- **Blame:** feeling angry and wanting to blame someone for passing the virus to you
- **Guilt:** feeling angry at yourself for contracting the virus
- **Dependent:** not earning an income during self-isolation, not being able to pay bills
- **Sexual frustration:** staying away from one's partner or lovers can lead to frustration
- **Claustrophobic:** you may panic about being stuck in a confined space
- **Obsessive-compulsive behaviour:** becoming paranoid or fixated on staying safe
- **Cravings for substances:** withdrawal symptoms from nicotine, alcohol, cannabis
- **Suicidal thoughts:** Depression may lead to thoughts of wanting to harm yourself

Tips to improve mental health

Some symptoms of emotional distress are normal and most people will be able to manage them on their own at home. Here are some tips to keeping your mind healthy:

- Remind yourself **this is not forever**. After 14 – 21 days you will most likely be okay
- **Make a routine** for yourself and follow it everyday
- Eat a **healthy diet**; avoid over-eating junk food; and drink plenty of water
- Get **regular sleep** but don't oversleep too much – even though you might feel bored
- Get **sunshine** by sitting close to a window or door with a mask on
- **Keep your mind busy**, e.g. do puzzles, read books/magazines, write poems, etc.
- Do light indoor **exercise** (or dancing!) to keep your body healthy
- Practice daily **yoga or meditation** to calm your mind and body
- Practice **deep breathing** exercises to relax your mind and body
- **Keep in touch** with loved ones or friends and update them on how you are feeling
- **Catch up** with friends or family – call one person a day
- **Laugh** out loud every day. This releases endorphins which make you feel good!
- **Limit the news** you read online or on TV to once or twice a day
- **Get creative**, e.g. adult colouring books; scrapbooks; learn a new language.
- Keep a radio on in your room (and **sing along to songs** you enjoy!)
- Do an online course and **learn something new** (lots of free courses are available)
- Keep a **Gratitude Book**: Every day write down one small thing you're grateful for
- Keep a **diary** about your experiences of self-isolation

Avoid

- Alcohol, cigarettes and drugs
- Overeating junk food
- Oversleeping
- Being on social media all day
- Fake news
- Starting small arguments with people around you
- Blaming others
- Negative people

Help is available

- Ambulance: 10177
- Police: 10111
- Drug Abuse helpline: 0800 12 13 14

South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)

SADAG is a non-profit organisation that offers mental health care services to people on the phone and in community support groups. Please call or SMS them to find out more.

- Free 24/7 Mental Health Helpline: 0800 456 789
- SMS: 32312 or WhatsApp: 076 882 2775
- Free online support groups: 0782787047

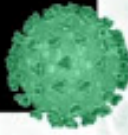
Other organizations

- Nedbank Doctors on Call Helpline: 0870550234 (8am-5pm)
- Gender-based violence 24/7 helpline: 0800 428 428 or *120*7867# for a call-back
- Epic Foundation (Gender violence): 0317640492 or 0710323260
- Xenophobia helpline (foreign nationals): SMS 44705 or Call 0607949882
- Alcoholics Anonymous: 031 3014959 or 0861435722
- Narcotics Anonymous: 079 592 2294 (WhatsApp) or call 086 100 6962
- UKZN Centre for Applied Psychology (free sessions): 0785121959 (WhatsApp)

Useful websites

- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
- <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/news/multimedia/infographics/covid-19>
- <http://psytalk.psyssa.com/general-public/>
- <https://www.nicd.ac.za>
- <https://www.nicd.ac.za/what-to-do-if-i-test-positive-for-coronavirus-disease-and-i-am-asked-to-home-isolate%e2%80%8b/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

LOCKDOWN UPDATE



ESSENTIAL CONTACTS

PresidencyZA
stateofthethenation.gov.za

Coronavirus Hotline	0800 029 999
Coronavirus WhatsApp	060 012 3456
National Institute for Communicable Diseases	0800 029 999
Presidential Hotline	17737
South African Police Service – Crime Stop and Anonymous Tip-offs	08600 10111
Reporting undue price increases	0800141880
Support to SMMEs in distress	0860 663 7867
National Crisis Line	0861322 322
Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit	0800 150 150
GB VF-related service complaints	0800 333177
Gender-based violence command centre	0800 428 428 or *120*7867# (free)
Women Abuse Helpline	0800150150
Persons with disabilities	SMS 'help' to 31531
National Human Trafficking Helpline	0800 222 777
Child line	0800 055 555
Suicide Crisis Line	0800 567 567 / 0800 456 789
AIDS Helpline	0800 012 322
SASSA call centre	0800 60 10 11
PostBank call centre	0800 53 54 55
Department of Trade and Industry	080 000 6543
Department of Home Affairs	0800 601190
Department of Water and Sanitation	0800 200 200
Department of Tourism	0860 868 747

Emergency Hotline: 0800 029 999

WhatsApp Support Line: 0600-123456

COVID-19

Online Resource & News Portal
SAcoronavirus.co.za



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Written and Compiled by King Dinuzulu Hospital Complex (KDHC):

Last updated: 15 May 2020