

## Reducing stress during the pandemic

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 06 November 2020 06:02

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SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and state behavioral health officials highlighted resources Oct. 27 to support New Mexicans during the ongoing health emergency.

“For many, the pandemic is a source of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty – but there is plenty we can do to take care of ourselves and our loved ones,” the governor said. “And it’s essential that we take time for genuine self-care. That’s how we’ll find the calm and stability to weather this time – together.”

“Even when we’re quarantining, we’re still all in this together,” New Mexico Behavioral Health Collaborative CEO Bryce Pittenger said. “Please reach out to mental health providers, faith or community leaders, and other people you trust during this time. When we stay connected, we stay strong.”

### ***HEALTHY DAILY HABITS***

Key tips include:

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Limit your viewing of repetitive news media; consider setting one or two times during the day to check media, and then take a break for more positive thoughts and activities.

Help children stay connected with friends through virtual means.

View news on prevention and treatment efforts by visiting New Mexico's COVID-19 webpage ([cv.nmhealth.org](http://cv.nmhealth.org)) or the Centers for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)).

Find time and space to talk about your fears and concerns with other adults.

Exercise (in a COVID-safe manner).

Read with children, help them write letters to family or friends they miss.

Plan unstructured time to relax, talk, and play with family members.

## **TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS**

*To make them feel safe*

Having conversations with your children allows you to know what they understand and what they might not. It also helps them develop a deeper understanding of the situation through questions and open dialogue, so everyone can be on the same page.

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*To know the crisis' impact on them*

The coronavirus pandemic is an unprecedented and traumatic event that affects everyone – but it doesn't affect us all the same way. It's important to understand what your child is feeling and thinking.

*To help them understand what is happening*

Ask your children what they know, what they think, what they feel about the situation. If a child asks, "Are people dying?" say yes. Don't lie, but remember to tell them that most people recover – and that very smart people are working on developing medicines (vaccines) that will keep us safe.

***For more resources including tips for parents, behavioral health support, easy ways to explain COVID to children and young adults, and free tutoring for students K-12, visit [Pu IITogether.org](https://www.IITogether.org)***

## **SELF-CARE**

Self-care is not selfish, nor is it an emergency response plan to be activated when stress becomes overwhelming. Instead, healthy self-care can renew our spirits and help us become more resilient. Think of self-care as having three basic aspects:

*Awareness*

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The first step is to seek awareness. This requires us to slow down and focus inwardly to determine how we are feeling, what our stress level is, what types of thoughts are going through our minds, and whether our behaviors and actions are consistent with who we want to be.

### *Balance*

The second step is to seek balance in all areas of life including work, personal and family life, rest, and leisure. We are more productive when we have had opportunities to rest and relax. Becoming aware of when we are losing balance gives us an opportunity to change.

### *Connection*

The final step is connection. It involves building connections and supportive relationships with co-workers, friends, family, and community. One of the most powerful stress-reducers is social connection.

## REACH OUT FOR HELP

***If you need to talk, please reach out – call (855) NMCRISIS or (855) 662-7474. If you want to text with a peer support worker use the NMCONNECT app available on smartphones. And if you're considering taking drastic steps, please call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255; (888) 628-9454 para Español.***