

## Supporting Clinicians Through the COVID-19 Pandemic

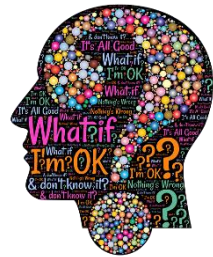
### Tip Sheet: Reducing Stress and Enhancing Coping Skills



This tip sheet offers suggestions for managing stress and identifying coping skills during the COVID-19 pandemic which Gov. Coumo described as a “toxic mix.”

#### Acknowledge your own emotions:

- Take inventory – describe emotions.
- Use an emotions chart and name all that you feel. (Daylio app)
- Interview yourself and journal your responses.



#### Identify the stressors: (circle your stressors)

<b>People Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ People who annoy you</li> <li>○ People who doubt you</li> <li>○ People who lie to you</li> <li>○ People who mistreat you</li> <li>○ People who assume you are stupid</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul>	<b>Work Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No PPE</li> <li>○ Dealing with COVID-19 patients</li> <li>○ Academic demands</li> <li>○ Office personal conflicts</li> <li>○ Lack of leadership support</li> <li>○ Lack of control</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul>	<b>Home Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housework</li> <li>○ Yard work</li> <li>○ Chaos</li> <li>○ Meal prep</li> <li>○ Meal clean up</li> <li>○ Repairs</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul>
<b>People We Love:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Spouse/partner</li> <li>○ Children</li> <li>○ Parents</li> <li>○ Siblings</li> <li>○ Relatives</li> <li>○ Colleagues</li> <li>○ Office team</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul>	<b>Financial Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Monthly bills</li> <li>○ Mortgage</li> <li>○ Loss of income</li> <li>○ Overspending</li> <li>○ Loans</li> <li>○ Unpredictable costs</li> <li>○ Food costs</li> <li>○ Shopping</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul>	<b>World Events Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local politics</li> <li>○ International politics</li> <li>○ World economic challenges</li> <li>○ Tragic events</li> <li>○ War</li> <li>○ Other</li> </ul>

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<b>Life Event Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Birthdays</li> <li>Holidays</li> <li>Family events/gatherings</li> <li>Weddings</li> <li>Funerals/death</li> <li>Accidents/injuries</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	<b>Personal Health Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illness</li> <li>Physical limitations</li> <li>Chronic diseases</li> <li>Cancers</li> <li>Hospitalizations</li> <li>End of life</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	<b>Educational Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of access to education</li> <li>Feels of inadequacy</li> <li>Too much information to learn</li> <li>Incomplete information</li> <li>Challenges accessing/gathering information</li> <li>Lack of wisdom</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>
<b>Technology Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of needed technology</li> <li>Technology not working</li> <li>Technology too slow</li> <li>Corrupt individuals using technology</li> <li>Lack of appropriate behavior on technology</li> <li>Attacks on technology (virus/malware)</li> <li>Cost for technology</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	<b>Dysfunctional Equipment Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failed appliances</li> <li>Failed automotive</li> <li>Not enough/appropriate equipment</li> <li>Broken needed equipment</li> <li>Cost for replacement equipment</li> <li>Pipe breaks</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	<b>Community Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theft</li> <li>Murder</li> <li>Rape</li> <li>Community fees</li> <li>Community rules</li> <li>Electrical outages</li> <li>Street repairs</li> <li>Closures</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>
<b>Faith/Religious Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demands or requirements</li> <li>No accessibility</li> <li>Demoralizing attitudes</li> <li>Conflicts in beliefs</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	<b>Nature Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bad weather</li> <li>Sudden climatic events (tornados)</li> <li>Global warming</li> <li>Natural disasters (fires)</li> <li>Pests/varmints</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	<b>Daily Event Stressors:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic</li> <li>Waiting in line</li> <li>Lost orders</li> <li>Delays</li> <li>Placed on hold</li> <li>Phone trees</li> <li>Wardrobe malfunctions</li> <li>Out of a necessity</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>

## Identify where your stress is in your body and how it manifests:

- Head/neck
- Jaw/teeth
- GI (nausea, diarrhea, intestinal spasms)
- Heart (tachycardia)
- Lungs (shallow respirations)
- Musculoskeletal
- Brain (foggy brain, poor judgment)
- Immune system (illnesses)
- Nervous/mental (anxiety)

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## What are the behaviors you demonstrate when stressed?

- Do you speed up?
  - Lash out at others (anger/yelling)
  - Throw things
  - Work harder
- Do you slow down?
  - Retreat to being alone
  - Get inside your head
  - Ignore other (stonewalling)
  - Work less effectively
- Do you release emotions?
  - Sulk
  - Cry
  - Laugh
  - Get angry
  - Other
- Combination of several
- Other



## How do you manage your stress?

- Ignore it
- Confront it
- Delay it until later
- Manage it in the moment

## Things to do to reduce stress:

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ○ Pray (alone, or with someone else)                      | ○ Sleep                           |
| ○ Talk it out with friends, mentor, confidant, and others | ○ Get coaching, counseling        |
| ○ Exercise  | ○ Complete projects or do hobbies |
| ○ Laugh   | ○ Work                            |
| ○ Journal   | ○ Take a walk                     |
| ○ Make a gratitude list                                   | ○ Listen to music                 |
| ○ Workout   | ○ Play an instrument              |
| ○ Play with your pet                                      | ○ Knit/crochet or craft           |
|   | ○ Bubble baths and aroma therapy  |

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## Do you eat when stressed? Be conscious of eating as a stress reducer:

- Do an observation on the way to the food source – the cookie, brownie, candy, ice cream
- Allow a space in-between your desire for it and recognize the emotion
- Write the emotions or tap out the emotion (see example below)
- Delay eating until you are calm again
- Have no/low calorie foods as options if you do grab something – make a better choice
- Cook meals needed for later in the day/week

## Be conscious of using a substance or process that can result in addictions as a stress reducer:

- Alcohol
- Smoking
- Eating/Sweets/Coffee/junk food
- Controlled substances
- Illicit substances
- Pornography
- Sex
- Computer usage/surfing the web
- Social media
- Video gaming
- Gambling
- Shopping/online
- Other behaviors



## Some stress reduction practices/activities:

1. **Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction** – short mindfulness activities do several of the things listed above can be beneficial. Check out the [University of Massachusetts Center for Mindfulness](#) or try an app like: [Headspace](#), [Calm](#), [BUDDHiFY](#), [Insight Timer](#), etc.
2. **Mapping Emotions** – try using the Daylio app to track emotions and/or recognize gratitude for each day ([Daylio](#) and [Delightful Journal](#) apps)
3. **Emotional Tapping:** a tapping coach helps you tap through emotions and produces healing. Salivary cortisol levels reduce >40% reduction; tapping meridian points 9 – helps to calm down the flight or fight and sympathetic nervous system. Here is an example by Dr. Leslie Cole:
  - Name the emotion(s) – what is it? What does it feel like? Where is it in your body? Describe it clearly and rank how you feel – anxious, etc.
  - Tap them out on the lateral side of the hand and complete the statements with, “But right now, I deeply and completely accept myself.” Then repeat 3 times and end on the closing statement each time.

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- Then on each of the nine points – make a statement of how you felt while tapping and move from hand, to top of head, to furrow of brow, the side of eyes, then under eye over maxillary sinuses, then over frenulum, to just above the chin, to the anterior chest under the clavicles, and finally on the left chest in the mid-axillary line at about rib 4 or the nipple line. Find an app at [The Tapping Solution](#)
- 4. **Workout/Dance** - Work out with the [American Heart Association](#) – free video workouts.
- 5. **Chi Gong** - “Qigong, qi gong, chi kung, or chi gung is a centuries-old system of coordinated body-posture and movement, breathing, and meditation used for the purposes of health, spirituality, and martial-arts training. [Wikipedia](#)” Find free videos on Chi Gong on YouTube or your TV cable network.
- 6. **Tai Chi** – “Tai chi is a system of exercise and movement developed long ago as a martial or training art that is now widely used for health and wellness,” explains Morrill. “It can be practiced by almost anyone and in almost any situation.” Often known as “moving meditation,” tai chi is a series of slow, gentle motions that are patterned after movements in nature. Most of the work is performed while standing and taking small steps, though it can be modified for seated practitioners as well. Learn more with the article titled: *The difference between tai chi and qi gong* at: <https://www.piedmont.org/living-better/the-difference-between-tai-chi-and-qi-gong>. Find free videos on Tai Chi on YouTube or your TV cable network.
- 7. **Heart Math**: <https://www.heartmath.com/> - Proven to help you reduce stress and anxiety by increasing your inner balance and self-security.



**Resources:** MH specialists, coaches, psychiatry, primary doctor, etc. Each picture is hyperlinked to the actual webpage. Simply click on the picture.

- American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.org/> - click on *psychological help center*, then *find a psychologist*.
- International Coaching Federation: <https://coachfederation.org/> - click on *find a coach*.
- American Psychiatric Association: <https://www.psychiatry.org/> - click on *Patient/Families* then click *find a psychiatrist*.
- To learn more about Dr. Leslie Cole. webpage: [www.DrLeslieCole.com](http://www.DrLeslieCole.com) and email [info@drlesliecole.com](mailto:info@drlesliecole.com).

## Resources

- [Find a Psychologist](#)
- [Order Free Brochures](#)
- [Request a Speaker](#)

[Find a Coach](#)

[PATIENTS & FAMILIES](#)

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- The American College of Physicians – COVID-19 Resources for physicians. <https://www.acponline.org/>
- The American Medical Association – resources for Physicians. <https://www.ama-assn.org/>
- The National Academy of Medicine – Well-being resources. <https://nam.edu/initiatives/clinician-resilience-and-well-being/clinician-well-being-resources-during-covid-19/>

