

# Managing Stress and Anxiety Around COVID-19

For coronavirus information for the UCLA community, please visit the [Ashe Center website](#) and [UCLA's information page](#).

Some anxiety is normal, especially during times when there are a lot of unknowns and questions around our safety and the safety of others. However, fear and anxiety can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in both adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in.

## **Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:**

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Difficulty concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems, including one's mental health
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety or fear
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images.
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes
- Increase in anger or irritability

## **People who may respond more strongly to the stress of a crisis include:**

- Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19
- Children and teens
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, or first responders
- People who have mental health conditions or concerns around substance use

The infographic is set against a blue background. On the left, a dark blue box contains the text 'I CANNOT CONTROL' in white, followed by a list of uncontrollable factors. On the right, a yellow hexagonal shape contains the text 'I CAN CONTROL' in blue, followed by a list of controllable factors. The RISE Center logo and website are at the bottom left.

**I CANNOT CONTROL**

- Predicting what will happen.
- The actions of others.
- My classes being online.
- How much toilet paper is at the store.
- How long this will last.

**RISE Center at UCLA**  
Heal. Connect. Thrive.  
<https://risecenter.ucla.edu/>

**I CAN CONTROL**

- My TRUE BRUIN attitude.
- My outlook on the situation.
- How I spend my time.
- How I follow CDC recommendations.
- Being mindful about social media and news consumption.
- My own social distancing.

# Things You Can Do To Support Yourself and Others:



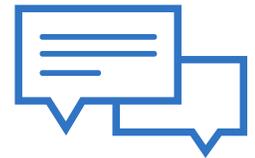
Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting. Limit news consumption to reliable sources.

For many of us, maintaining routines will help keep us positive, balanced and mentally well. Make time to unwind. Whether it is mindfulness, talking to your friends and family members, going for walks, journaling, or watching Netflix, now is the time to increase positive experiences in your daily schedule. Do things that give you purpose and meaning.



During these anxiety-provoking times, it's important to remember the tried-and-true anxiety prevention and reduction strategies. Get adequate sleep, exercise regularly, practice mindfulness, spend time in nature and employ relaxation techniques when stressed. Prioritizing these behaviors during the coronavirus crisis can go a long way toward increasing your psychological well being and bolstering your immune system. Even while maintaining a safe distance from other people, you can still go outside! Also, a lot of local gyms and individuals are offering free online exercise classes.

Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Social distancing does not mean social isolation. Reach out to others and offer support, empathy, information and, if possible, tangible help. Stay connected using technology such as video chat, Zoom, etc. Personal relationships are crucial in maintaining perspective and elevating mood.



Treat everyone with dignity and respect. Members of our community are experiencing additional fear right now because of the increased suspicion and racism from others who wrongly attach COVID-19 to an ethnicity or nationality. Language like COVID-19 “victims” or “the diseased” is stigmatizing and harmful. Instead, we can say “people who are being treated for or recovering from COVID-19.”

If you are already connected to a mental health provider, continue with regular treatment. If you are not connected to a provider and would benefit from talking with someone, please reach out to CAPS to learn more about your various treatment options, including tele-mental health services. Most importantly, form a plan on how to access healthcare workers, therapy providers, and prescriptions if needed.



# Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Services



Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is aware of the significant impacts COVID-19 may have on student emotional well-being and mental health. CAPS remains fully-committed to serving students during this unprecedented time. In an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our communities, CAPS has transitioned to telehealth services only, operating from 8:00am to 5:00pm daily. **As always, crisis support is always available by phone to any student 24/7 at 310-825-0768.**

## How to Initiate Services:

CAPS will make every effort to continue to provide students newly seeking treatment with telehealth clinical care. Students who would like to initiate treatment, whether you are here on campus or are away, should call CAPS during normal business hours at 310-825-0768 to request a Tele-Triage Appointment. Students will be provided with a same-day zoom or telephone triage phone appointment, which will provide a brief screen and mental health assessment and options for appropriate care, including a virtual intake appointment with a CAPS clinician. Many students will be able to receive care this way. If this is not the best course of treatment, you will be offered clinical coordination support to assist you with other mental health care either locally or wherever you reside, and/or in-person crisis support when needed. CAPS is suspending session limits for both NON-SHIP and SHIP students until Fall 2020.

## Established Care:

### Therapy Appointments:

CAPS clinicians will make every effort to offer support and provide care for ongoing clients. CAPS clinicians will provide remote zoom or telephone follow up appointments for students currently in treatment. For students who have left the state, your clinician will work with you to coordinate ongoing care based on your needs.

### Psychiatry Services:

Ongoing follow up care for students in psychiatric care will be provided via zoom or telehealth with a CAPS clinician. Psychiatrists will adhere to all federal, state and medical mandates when prescribing psychiatric meds. Psychiatrists will work to ensure students have adequate access to necessary medication whenever possible.

### Group Therapy:

Please refer to our [website](#) for updates to our services. An abridged number of groups and wellness skills workshops will be offered virtually during Spring Quarter.

### Clinical Coordination/Case Management/ Campus Consultation Services:

CAPS clinical coordination services will operate via telehealth. CAPS consultation services remain available via phone for the campus community members who have questions about clinical care or students in distress. In addition, UCLA Case Management Services is also available. [www.studentincrisis.com](http://www.studentincrisis.com) (310) 825-0628.

**If you are scheduled for an appointment, but are unable to participate, you may also choose to cancel or reschedule your appointment. Although fees are typically charged for late cancellations and no shows, CAPS will be waiving fees, as appropriate.**

# Resilience in Your Student Experience (RISE) Center



The RISE (Resilience In Your Student Experience) Center, is an affiliate program and physical extension of UCLA's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). The RISE Center is a holistic wellness hub that provides an array of programs, classes, trainings, and self-directed resources to foster and support resilience, connection, and well-being for our UCLA community. Services are free of cost to students and are led by a team of healing practitioners, mental health experts, prevention educators, wellness advisors, and student ambassadors.

**RISE will be offering virtual mindfulness, connection circles, and other stress management resources such as a library of online guided meditations. Check out the website: <https://www.risecenter.ucla.edu> or Instagram: [@RISEcenterUCLA](https://www.instagram.com/RISEcenterUCLA)**

# Campus Assault Resources & Education (CARE) Program



Campus Assault Resources & Education (CARE) operates from an anti-oppression framework and is committed to the eradication of sexual and gender-based violence through creating and sustaining a safe, healthy, and equitable community for all people. CARE provides confidential advocacy, comprehensive outreach and prevention education, and holistic healing programs for all members of the UCLA community. Through these avenues, CARE works to ensure that the UCLA Community understands their right to a safe campus experience and provides support to those impacted by sexual and gender-based violence.

CARE remains engaged with campus, local, state, and national agencies as information related to COVID-19 continues to evolve. The CARE office is still connecting with clients during this time. However, due to California's Safer at Home order, all of our appointments will be done virtually at this time. You can request an appointment by emailing [advocate@careprogram.ucla.edu](mailto:advocate@careprogram.ucla.edu), calling us at 310-206-2465, or by logging on to our website at [www.careprogram.ucla.edu](http://www.careprogram.ucla.edu). We will respond to all requests during business hours, Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-5:30 pm.

## Online Mental Health Resources:

### LiveHealth Online



With LiveHealth Online you have the ability to see a licensed therapist or psychologist through your phone, tablet or computer with internet access. Utilize LiveHealth Online 24 hours a day on weekdays, weekends, and campus holidays. The cost for students with UC SHIP is \$5; no referral for UCSHIP. Coupon codes to waive the fee for services rendered are available for all UCLA Students (does not cover late or missed appointment fees). We have two separate coupon codes for therapy and psychiatry. To receive these codes, please call CAPS front desk at (310) 825-0768.

<https://www.counseling.ucla.edu/resources/online-resources-apps>

### The STAND Program



The Screening and Treatment for Anxiety & Depression (STAND) Program is a mental health service for all registered UCLA students. The STAND Program can be used to quickly screen for symptoms and receive immediate treatment. It was developed by the UCLA Depression Grand Challenge as part of a large research initiative on mental health.

[bit.ly/STANDprogram](http://bit.ly/STANDprogram)

Email: [stand@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:stand@mednet.ucla.edu)

### TAO: Therapy Assistance Online



The TAO self-help platform was built to support student educational and skill development needs in the areas of mental wellness and overall well-being. TAO self-help tools can be used when students need support and education for common issues such as: improving mood, calming anxiety, managing stress, succeeding in relationships, improving communication skills, exploring issues related to alcohol and drug use, and managing anger. These resources are not intended as a substitute for treatment from a qualified mental health professional. TAO is FREE to use for all UCLA students!

[counseling.ucla.edu/TAO](http://counseling.ucla.edu/TAO)

### Mindfulness Awareness Research Center (MARC)



The mission of the UCLA Mindfulness Awareness Research Center (MARC) is to foster mindful awareness across the lifespan through education and research to promote well-being and a more compassionate society.

**The MARC website provides information about MARC Virtual offerings: free mindfulness drop-ins, webinars on using mindfulness in these times, and their free UCLA Mindful App, which is updated regularly.**

<https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/default.cfm>

### NOCD



NOCD helps those who have unwanted thoughts, images, or urges that feel "stuck" in their head until they do certain actions to make them go away. These are symptoms of OCD and generally surround themes like: contamination, religion, aggression, or sexual orientation. NOCD helps provide community, tools, and specialized OCD therapy to students from their phone. They can connect with a therapist to do the gold-standard exposure and response prevention (ERP) therapy, which is proven to reduce OCD symptoms, and get 24/7 support in-between sessions- all covered by California health insurance providers.

[lp.treatmyocd.com/UCLA](http://lp.treatmyocd.com/UCLA)

# UCLA Food and Financial Resources:

## Take care of your basic needs (including food security).

- Community Programs Office: Please check the [CPO Facebook page](#) for up-to-date hours of operation.
- Email the UCLA Economic Crisis Response Team at [ecr@saonet.ucla.edu](mailto:ecr@saonet.ucla.edu)
- Dial 211 for information about Community food banks and resources.
- You may be eligible to receive CalFresh benefits.

# Psychological Support Apps:

## Breathe2Relax

- This app walks users through breathing exercises that help to reduce stress, stabilize mood, control anger, and manage anxiety. Free.

## Calm

- The app delivers meditations that can help you to destress, as well as breathing programs, music, and sounds from nature to relax your mind and body and promote better sleep. Free with in-app purchases.

## Focus Booster

- This app is based on the principles of the Pomodoro Technique, and is aimed at individuals who procrastinate and feel overwhelmed by tasks. It's designed to enhance your focus and remove any anxiety you might have with time pressures. Free with in-app purchases.

## Headspace

- Useful for both anxiety and depression, teaches skills including mindfulness, cognitive diffusion, breathing exercises, meditation practice, tips for increased relaxation, concentration. Free 2 week trial.

## Moodtools

- Depression resource, provides psychoeducation, a depression symptom questionnaire (PHQ-9), a thought diary, and videos designed to combat negative thoughts and alleviate feelings of hopelessness. Free with in-app purchases.

## What's up

- Uses CBT and Acceptance Commitment therapy to track positive and negative habits. Free with in-app purchases.

## SuperBetter

- Helps to increase resiliency, strength, and optimism to relieve symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Free.

## 7 Cups

- Anonymous emotional support & counseling from active listeners\* available 24/7. Includes 1-on-1 and group chat. (\*Listeners are not licensed professionals). The website has self-help guides, mindfulness exercises, and community Q&A section. Free.

\*These apps have not been reviewed by CAPS and are not endorsed by UCLA.

# For Parents and Caregivers:

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support.

## How to support your child or loved one:

- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand. Keep information simple.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Limit your family's exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. Create a daily schedule.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well.

# Resilience in the Face of Transition

**Practicing different ways of responding can boost your resilience. Check out these strategies:**

## **Focus on What You Can Control**

Sometimes we fixate on events out of our control. But rather than blaming others or trying to change them, resilient people set their sights on what they can control. Ask yourself, “What can I control in this situation?”

## **Challenge Catastrophic Thoughts**

It’s easy to assume the worst will occur and we won’t be able to handle it. Instead, remind yourself of transitions and challenges you navigated in the past. Ask yourself:

1. What’s the worst case scenario?
2. What’s the likelihood of that worst case scenario?
3. Even if that unlikely worst case scenario happened, could you handle it? (What would be the realistic consequences?)

## **Be in the Present**

What do you notice about your breath right now? Our breath is an excellent anchor in the present, but sometimes we get stuck in the past or worry about the future. Practice STOP: Stop, Take a few deep breaths, Observe, and Proceed.

## **Find Your Priorities**

The most resilient people see change as an opportunity to align priorities. How do you want to spend your time? What’s really important to you?

## **Practice Self-Care After a Transition**

Often life’s transitions involve losses. During these transitions, don’t push away feelings. Acknowledge your feelings as valid and consider what you might learn from the loss. Realize you might experience temporary sleep and appetite changes, with lower energy. Seek support among friends and family, and consider speaking with a mental health professional.

# Remain Hopeful

- Consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective.
- Look for opportunities to practice being more patient or kind with yourself, or to see the situation as an opportunity to learn or build strengths.
- Celebrate successes, find things to be grateful about, and take satisfaction in completing tasks, even small ones.
- Give yourself small breaks from the stress of the situation by doing something you enjoy.
- Draw upon your spirituality, those who inspire you, or your personal beliefs and values.
- Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you manage previous life’s adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak.

# Remember

**Each of us can play a very important role by caring for ourselves and caring for others in our community.**

If you have additional questions, concerns, needs, please do not hesitate to reach out directly to CAPS. At this time, services are being provided remotely. Please check our website for additional updates. You can contact CAPS by calling 310.825.0768. CAPS has 24-hour phone Crisis Counseling available by calling our main number

## **Information gathered and adapted from the following sources:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/>

World Health Organization (WHO): <https://www.who.int/>

<https://mindwell.healthy.ucla.edu/resources/>

Mental Health America (MHA): <https://www.mhanational.org/>

Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (CSTS): <https://www.cstsonline.org/>

National Center for PTSD: <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>

7 science-based strategies to cope with coronavirus anxiety, TheConversation.com ADAA member Jelena Kecmanovic, PhD quoted