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EXTENSION

BE A HERO!

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Some stress is a normal part of life, but the pressures, concerns, and confusion resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have been far from normal. If you have felt overwhelmed by the changing mandates and recommendations, the fear of disease, the challenges of working and learning from home, and maybe the loss of a job or the passing of a loved one, that is only natural.

There are so many things you need to do to take care of the people you love, but you need to do some things to take care of yourself, too. With just a few small actions, you can help yourself feel better, find some calm and peace of mind, and feel happiness and hope for the future.

Take care of yourself, and you will be stronger, healthier, and better able to help those who need you. Because that's what heroes do.

Stress can cause changes in your outlook and even your physical health.

- Feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration.
- Changes in appetite, energy levels, and interests.
- Difficulty focusing, concentrating, and making decisions.
- Difficulty sleeping or having bad dreams.
- Physical reactions, like headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, and other substances.

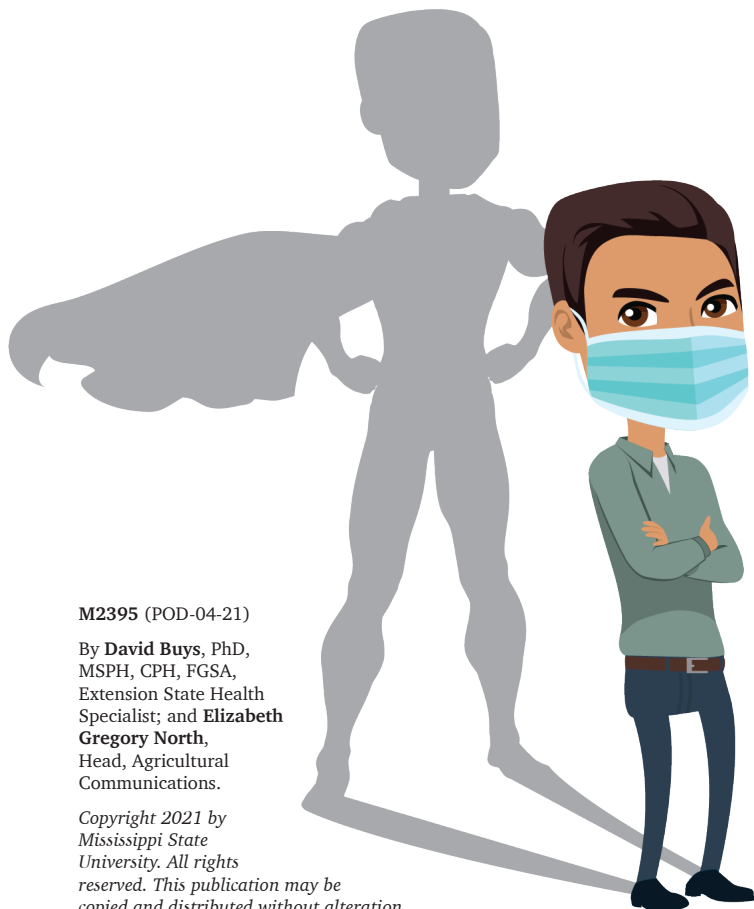
If you are experiencing any of these things, understand that they could be caused by stress. Talk to your healthcare provider if physical reactions or health problems become severe. Seek help if alcohol or other substances cause problems in your life.



Take steps to reduce stress in your life.

- Identify and accept the things that you don't have control over.
- Identify the stress-causers that you can control, and do the best you can with the resources you have to make changes.
- Follow a consistent daily routine whenever you can.
 - » Try to go to bed and wake up at the same times every day.
 - » Take breaks from work to stretch, exercise, or check in with your family, friends, coworkers, or neighbors.
 - » If you work from home, set a regular time to end your work for the day.
 - » Eat regular, nutritious meals, including fruits and vegetables.
 - » When you're not working, make time to do things you enjoy.
- Spend time outdoors, especially in the sunshine, either being physically active or relaxing. Be sure to use sunscreen!

- Take a few minutes and just breathe. Take a deep breath and let the air out slowly. Do this five times.
- Talk with your coworkers and supervisors about stress at work.
 - » Identify things that cause stress and work together to find solutions.
 - » Ask about how to access mental health resources in your workplace.
- Talk with people you trust about your concerns, how you are feeling, or how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting you. Connect with others through phone calls, email, text messages, letters or cards, video chats, and social media.
- Check on others. Helping someone else improves your sense of control, belonging, and self-esteem. Look for safe ways to offer support to others, especially if they are showing signs of stress, such as depression and anxiety.
- Know the facts about COVID-19. Be informed about how to protect yourself and others. Understanding the risk and sharing accurate information with people you care about can reduce stress and help you make a connection with other people.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to the news, including on social media.
- Remind yourself that you are not alone. Everyone is in an unusual situation with limited resources.
- Encourage yourself. Tell yourself that you are strong and capable. You have been through difficult things before, and you can handle this. You're a hero!
- If you feel you may be misusing alcohol or other drugs (including prescription drugs) as a way to cope, reach out for help.
- If you are being treated for a mental health condition, continue with your treatment and be aware of any new or worsening symptoms. If things get worse, call your healthcare provider.



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By David Buys, PhD, MSPH, CPH, FGSA, Extension State Health Specialist; and Elizabeth Gregory North, Head, Agricultural Communications.

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You can help others reduce their stress, too.

- Stay connected with your friends and family.
- Phone calls or video chats can help both you and your loved ones cope with stress and feel less lonely or isolated.

If you or someone you know needs more help, know what to do.

If you feel you or someone in your household may harm themselves or someone else, get help:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- Call 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).
- The Online Lifeline Crisis Chat is free and confidential. You'll be connected to a skilled, trained counselor in your area.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

- Call 1-800-799-7233 (TTY 1-800-787-3224).

Mississippi Department of Mental Health Helpline

- Call 1-877-210-8513.

If you are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, get help:

Disaster Distress Helpline

- Call or text 1-800-985-5990.