

Ways to support others

What is collective trauma?

A traumatic psychological effect shared by a group of people including an entire society. Traumatic events can have a collective reaction, often influencing society's culture. Everyone can experience challenges differently and have a unique perspective on trauma.

- About 4% of U.S. residents have experienced trauma and most likely have some level of post trauma impact including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- Someone you know might struggle with PTSD after they face a traumatic event like an accident, assault, or mass traumatic event.
- Traumatic events can impair our ability to cope with what is happening and lead to sadness, grief, pain, panic, confusion, despair, anxiety, or depression.
- COVID-19 has created many stress related events that could cause trauma. Not only does this pandemic affect physical health, but mental health too.

How can I help?

[Mentalhealthfirstaid.org](https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org) suggest 5 steps to help others who struggle during COVID-19. Before you help someone else, ensure your own safety. You can't help someone if you're not okay.

- **Encourage** the person to talk about his or her reactions only if they feel ready. Listen in a respectful and nonjudgmental way.
- **Help** the person identify sources of support, including loved ones, friends, and professional resources.
- **Encourage** the person to get rest and do things that feel good like take baths, read, exercise, or watch television. Encourage them to think about coping strategies they have successfully used in the past. Remind them to spend time where they feel safe and comfortable.
- **Respect** the person's need to be alone at times.
- **Discourage** the person from using negative coping strategies like working too hard, using alcohol and other drugs, or engaging in self-destructive behavior.

Take care of yourself too

- Stay connected with people. Technology is a great resource when physical proximity is not an option.
- Remember the basics. Be sure to get enough sleep, eat well, and exercise.
- Create a coping toolkit for yourself. Put together a list of activities and objects that help you feel grounded, safe, bring you joy, and increase your quality of life.

Resources

Use these resources and tips to help yourself, family, friends and neighbors. Together we can strengthen our communities during and after this pandemic. Visit these websites for information:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/masstrauma/factsheets/public/coping.pdf>