COVID-19 and mental health: There’s a world of help available to you

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How are you, really?

It’s a simple question, but the answer is rarely simple. Even in uneventful times, each of us can experience personal challenges. Right now, the pandemic is placing additional stresses on our time, our relationships and our finances.

It’s OK to recognize when you’re struggling, and you don’t have to manage it alone. The following employee resources and publicly available tools give you a spectrum of options to address everything from minor stress to acute anxiety or depression.

Employee exclusive tools

**Real Help Hotline**: This hotline is a completely free and confidential resource for CU employees and students. You can speak with professional counselors at any time of the day or night and receive referrals for local resources or focused crisis counseling.

**LiveHealth Online**: Employees covered by an Anthem health plan are encouraged to use telehealth in place of office visits when possible during the pandemic. A telehealth medical provider can help with initial mental health screenings, but the LiveHealth platform also offers psychology and psychiatry help. There are informative videos at the bottom of each of these pages to help you navigate and grow more comfortable using telehealth.

**CU Wellness Webinars**: From July 28-30, System Administration Human Resources will host three self-care and mental health webinars with Alex Yannacone, the director of Education and Community Programs at the Arthur E. Johnson Depression Center on the Anschutz Medical Campus. This month, featured workshops cover self-care, stress management, and mental resilience.

**myStrength & Calm**: If you’re enrolled in a Kaiser medical plan, you have access to both the myStrength app and the Calm app. The MyStrength program gives users access to coping strategies, community support and interactive activities to help navigate anxiety, depression, sleep loss, substance abuse and other common mental health challenges and unhealthy
coping mechanisms.

Calm is a meditation app that features more than 100 guided meditations, video tutorials on stretching and mindful movements, sleep stories to guide you into a more restful sleep and other tools.

You can download the apps from the myStrength page by clicking the “Get Calm” or “Get myStrength” buttons.

**Colorado State Employee Assistance Program** [11]: The CSEAP is a confidential resource for all state employees that offers training, resources, short-term counseling, referrals and more. They’ve updated offerings to include resources devoted to the unique stresses of COVID-19 and social isolation, and they’ve put together a page on managing fear and self-care [12].

**Publicly available resources**

**Mental Health Resources Hub** [13]: This platform is an online digital compendium of mental health resources supported by Anthem. The site is free, powered by PsychHub, and provides videos and guides to help you manage the many problems people are facing during the pandemic, including panic attacks, depression, social isolation and speaking with children about trauma.

**Centers for Disease Control** [14]: The CDC doesn’t focus on infectious disease alone. They’ve put together a page dedicated to the mental health challenges inherent with a global pandemic and quarantine protocols. This page is a considerable index of all the general and specialized mental health resources available to you.

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** [15]: Similar to the CDC page, SAMHSA has a page dedicated to Coronavirus mental health concerns with a fact sheet on specific quarantine-related stressors and related material covering stress, parenting concerns, grief and more.

**8 Resources to Support Your Mental Wellness** [16]: The CU Health Plan put together this document detailing 8 websites and apps that can help you manage your mental health.

1. 7 Cups of Tea [17]
2. DBSA (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance) [18]
3. Happify [19]
4. Mindshift CBT [20]
5. Moodtools [21]
6. Sanvello [22]
7. SAM (Self-Help for Anxiety Management) [23]
8. What’sUp? [24]

Learn more about each of these resources and decide what’s right for you with this PDF [16].

Above all, remember you don’t need to be in a crisis before you seek assistance. There dozens of tools available, catering to the most mild symptoms to the most serious. There’s more to being well than just “not being terrible” and you may find relief simply in knowing your thoughts and feelings are shared by thousands of others. Take a break. Take a breath. Take
advantage of any and all help available to you.