

March 16, 2021

COVID-19 Resource Guide

Mental & Behavioral Health



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●●● A NOTE FROM CONGRESSWOMAN SUZAN DELBENE ●●●

The COVID-19 pandemic is the largest public health and economic crisis our state and county have faced in a lifetime. Many people have lost their jobs, kids are out of school, and businesses have closed their doors. This situation requires bold action to provide relief to the most affected and provide a strong recovery.


I want you to know that I'm fighting for you in Congress. Since the beginning of this outbreak, my priorities at the federal level are protecting families, workers, and small businesses, and getting our health care system the resources it needs to save lives.

Congress has now passed three major bipartisan emergency relief packages to address this pandemic and provide economic resources to our communities. This guide contains information about the most recent American Rescue Plan package related to behavioral health supports and provides existing state and federal mental health resources available during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is meant to be a reference tool and the information within is not exhaustive.

Because the situation is constantly evolving, check my website (delbene.house.gov) or call my office in Kirkland at 425-485-0085 for additional assistance.

Please know that my staff and I are here to help. Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Suzan DelBene
U.S. Representative

TABLE OF CONTENTS

QUICK GUIDE	4
GENERAL INFORMATION ON COVID-19	5
THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN	7
CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND.....	8
COPING WITH STRESS	8
WHERE CAN I FIND HELP?	12
MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS AND HEALTH CARE.....	14
MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR SENIORS	16
MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR VETERANS	18
MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES	20

QUICK GUIDE

For an immediate, life-threatening emergency, call 911.

If you are in emotional crisis or distress, call the **National Suicide Prevention Hotline** at 800-273-TALK (8255), or text “HEAL” to 741741. Lines are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

National Veterans Crisis Line: 800-273-8255, then press 1.

Non-emergency assistance, call 211.

Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Assistance:
800-659-2955 or online at <http://www.sba.gov/content/disaster-assistance>

FEMA Region X (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington):
425-487-4600 or online at <https://www.fema.gov/region-x-ak-id-or-wa>

American Red Cross:
Disaster and Emergency Assistance: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help.html>

Washington State Emergency Management Division:
800-562-6108 or 253-512-7000 or online at <https://mil.wa.gov/emd-contact-us>

For assistance please contact any of my offices, or visit my website at www.delbene.house.gov

Kirkland Office:
450 Central Way
Suite 3100
Kirkland, WA 98033
(425) 485-0085

Mount Vernon Office:
204 W. Montgomery St.
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 416-7879

Washington, DC Office:
2330 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-6311

GENERAL INFORMATION ON COVID-19

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

- General information and up-to-date statistics are available on the CDC's dedicated [COVID-19 page](#).
- Important information from the CDC on reducing stigma can be found [here](#).

World Health Organization (WHO)

- Information on how to protect yourself and others can be found on the WHO's [Advice for the Public page](#).

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

- In-depth information about COVID-19 research, testing, and data sharing can be found at the NIH's [Coronavirus Page](#).

Washington State Department of Health (DOH)

- Our state's data sets on testing, deaths, and infection rates can be found on the DOH website [here](#).
- If you have questions about what is happening in Washington, or how the virus is spread, please call **800-525-0127** and press # from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week.
- You may also text "Coronavirus" to **211211** to receive the latest information on COVID-19, including county-level updates, and resources for families, businesses, students, and more.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

- NAMI's Washington State chapter has an incredibly comprehensive [Coronavirus Resource Guide](#) available on their web page.

Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)

- On May 2, FEMA [announced](#) approval of 30 states and the District of Columbia for its Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training program. The program helps fund state-provided crisis counseling services to residents struggling with stress and anxiety as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- This includes **\$2.1 million for Washington State**, which will be used by Health Care Authority (HCA) to roll out a program called **Washington Listens**, that will help reach people who are

affected by the stress of the outbreak. Read more about the program in the release [here](#).

Washington State Office of the Governor

- You can find up-to-date information and resources regarding COVID-19 on the state's all-in-one resource website, coronavirus.wa.gov.

THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Reducing trauma and toxic stress for families by cutting child poverty in half. The historic \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan builds upon the four previous relief packages passed in April and December 2020 to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

It critically expands the **Child Tax Credit (CTC) for one year, providing direct cash payments to most American families with children 17 and under. This will cut child poverty in half, drastically improving children's mental and physical health** by preventing toxic stressors like food and housing insecurity. This is a provision I fought for and is modeled off of the American Family Act, which would make the expanded CTC a permanent benefit.

Additionally, the ARP **invests \$4 billion to expand behavioral and mental health services nationwide— a compounding public health crisis** exacerbated by the effects of long-term social isolation and exposure to stress and trauma experienced by our communities over the course of the last year.

Specific provisions of the ARP's \$4 billion investment include:

- \$1.5 billion for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment block grants, and an additional \$1.5 billion for Community Mental Health block grants;
- \$420 million for certified community behavioral health clinics;
- **\$280 million to support programs focused on prevention of burn out among health care providers and other public safety officers;**
- \$120 million to the Indian Health Service (IHS) for behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment and prevention programs, and
- \$100 million to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to provide behavioral and mental health services, with an additional \$80 million going to support the HRSA Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program.

CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND

The second coronavirus relief fund passed by Congress in December 2020 includes:

- \$4.25 billion for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to increase mental health and substance use disorder services. No less than \$125 million SAMSHA funds should be provided to Tribes, Tribal organizations, urban Indian health organization/service providers. Specific provisions include:
 - \$1.65 billion for the Substance Abuse and Prevention Treatment Block Grant.
 - \$1.65 billion for the Mental Health Services Block Grant.
 - \$600 million for Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics.
 - \$50 million for Project AWARE to support school-based mental health for children.
 - \$50 million for suicide prevention programming.
 - \$240 million in state emergency grants
 - \$10 million for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

COPING WITH STRESS

What is social distancing?

Social distancing is a way to keep people from interacting closely or frequently enough to spread an infectious disease. Schools and other gathering places such as movie theaters may close, and sports events and religious services may be canceled.

What is quarantine?

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who have been exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. It lasts long enough to ensure the person has not contracted an infectious disease.

What is isolation?

Isolation prevents the spread of an infectious disease by separating people who are sick from those who are not. It lasts as long as the disease is contagious.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- Fear and worry about your health and the health of your loved ones.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Worsening of mental health conditions.
- Increased use of [alcohol](#), [tobacco](#), or [other drugs](#).

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.

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 severe illness](#) from COVID-19.
- Children and teens.
- People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors, other health care providers, and first responders.
- People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use.

What to Expect

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations such as an infectious disease outbreak that requires social distancing, quarantine, or isolation. People may feel:

- **Anxiety, worry, or fear** related to:
 - Your health status;
 - The health status of others whom you may have exposed to the disease;
 - The resentment that your friends and family may feel if they need to go into quarantine as a result of contact with you;
 - The experience of monitoring yourself, or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of the disease;
 - Time taken off from work and the potential loss of income and job security; or
 - The challenges of securing things you need, such as groceries and personal care items.
- **Concern** about being able to effectively care for children or others in your care.
- **Uncertainty** or frustration about how long you will need to remain in this situation, and uncertainty about the future.

- **Loneliness** associated with feeling cut off from the world and loved ones.
- **Anger** if you think you were exposed to the disease because of others' negligence.
- **Boredom and frustration** because you may not be able to work or engage in regular day-to-day activities.
- **Uncertainty or ambivalence** about the situation
- **Desire** to use alcohol or drugs to cope.
- **Symptoms of depression**, such as feelings of hopelessness, changes in appetite, or sleeping too little or too much.
- **Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**, such as intrusive distressing memories, flashbacks (reliving the event), nightmares, changes in thoughts and mood, and being easily startled.

Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their stress can also make your community stronger.

Some strategies for coping with stress are below:

- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories**, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- **Take care of your body.**
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or [meditate](#)
 - [Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals](#)
 - [Exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep](#)
 - Avoid [alcohol](#) and [drugs](#)
- **Make time to unwind** by trying to do activities you enjoy.
- **Connect with others** by talking with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- **Check-in with your loved ones often.** Virtual communication can help you and your loved ones feel less lonely and isolated.

If you or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others:

- Call 911.
- Visit the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#), call 800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

- Visit the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#), call 800-799-7233, or TTY 800-787-3224.

Understanding the risk to yourself and people you care about can make an outbreak less stressful. Learn and share the facts about COVID-19 and help [stop the spread of rumors](#). When you share accurate information about COVID-19, you can help make people feel less stressed, make a connection with them, and [help stop stigma](#).

Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. Additional information can be found at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) [Disaster Preparedness](#) page.

Learn more about [taking care of your emotional health](#) during a stressful event like the COVID-19 outbreak. More information can be found on the CDC's website [here](#).

Read the American Psychological Association's advice on building resilience in the face of stress [here](#).

Read more on taking control of your behavioral health in [this publication](#) from **SAMHSA**.

WHERE CAN I FIND HELP?

Immediate Crisis Assistance

- **Crisis Text Line**: text "NAMI" to **741741** to chat with a trained crisis counselor.
 - Free 24/7 text line for those in crisis (English only)
- **SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline [En Español]**: call **800-985-5990**. Press 2 for Spanish-language support.
 - Provides 24/7 crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**: call **800-273-8255**.
 - If you or someone you know is in crisis—whether they are considering suicide or not—please call the toll-free lifeline to speak with a trained crisis counselor 24/7
- **The Trevor Project Resources**: call **866-488-7386**, instant message a counselor on their website, or text “start” to **678678**.
 - The Trevor Project is a national organization offering support, including suicide prevention, for LGBTQ youth and their friends
 - **Trevor Support Center**: educational resources and FAQs
- **Trans Lifeline**: call **877-565-8860**.
 - Trans Lifeline is a trans-led organization that connects trans individuals to support, community, and a variety of resources
- **Recovery HelpLine**: for 24-hour emotional support, and referrals to treatment and recovery services anywhere in the state, call **866-789-1511**.
- **RAINN [En Español]**: 24/7 safe and confidential sexual assault hotline that connects individuals to a local service provider who can provide a variety of free resources.
 - Hotline number: **800-656-HOPE (4673)**
 - [Online chat](#)

Assistance Over the Phone

A warmline is a confidential, non-crisis emotional support telephone hotline staffed by volunteers. To find a warmline that serves your area, visit the [NAMI Helpline Warmline Directory](#) on the [NAMI Resource Library](#).

Finding a Therapist

The following options are available to individuals living in Washington state, according to Washington [DOH](#):

- If you have health insurance, check with the insurance company about what providers and services are covered.
- If you qualify for Medicaid, visit [Apple Health](#) for information on how to access treatment services.
- If your workplace has an employee assistance program, you should be able to get confidential counseling through it.
- If you go to a school or college with a counseling center or school counselors, they can help you find a counselor.
- Your local crisis line or [state mental health crisis line \(by county\)](#) should be able to help you with a therapy referral.
- [2-1-1's online database](#) is another way to find local resources.
- For 24-hour emotional support, and referrals to treatment and recovery services anywhere in the state, call the [Washington Recovery Help Line](#).
- If you need to find a therapist and don't know where to start, the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's page](#) on national therapist locators may be useful.

Online Resources and Databases

- NAMI Washington: [COVID-19 Information and Resources](#)
- Washington DOH: [Resources and Recommendations](#)
- Washington State Psychological Association: [COVID-19 Updates](#)
- American Psychological Association: [COVID-19 Information and Resources](#)
- The State of Washington: [Mental and Emotional Well-Being](#)

MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS AND HEALTH CARE

Read more about the Washington Health Benefits Exchange's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

Read more information on your health insurance rights during COVID-19 at the Office of the Insurance Commissioner's web page [here](#).

You can apply for free or low-cost Apple Health (Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program) year-round.

How to apply for free or low-cost Apple Health:

- **New?**
Create an account and [apply](#).
[See the eligibility requirements for free or low-cost Apple Health.](#)
- **Existing account?**
[Sign in](#) and update (report a change) your income to see if you qualify for free or low-cost Apple Health or other financial help.

If you do not qualify for free or low-cost Apple Health, you can still qualify for a Special Enrollment Period to get health insurance (if you have life changes that qualify you). Qualifying life changes include losing job-based coverage, income changes, having a baby, getting married, gaining a new household member (dependent), or having certain other life changes.

How to apply for a Special Enrollment:

- **New?**
Create an account and [apply](#).
- **Existing account?**
[Sign in](#) and update (report a change) your income to see if you qualify for free or low-cost Apple Health or other financial help.

Medicare

Find more information on mental health coverage available to traditional Medicare beneficiaries [here](#).

[Medicare Part B \(Medical Insurance\)](#) helps pay for these covered outpatient mental health services, among others:

- One [depression screening](#) per year. The screening must be done in a primary care doctor's office or primary care clinic that can provide follow-up treatment and referrals.

- Individual and group psychotherapy with doctors or certain other licensed professionals allowed by the state where you get the services.
- Family counseling, if the main purpose is to help with your treatment.
- Testing to find out if you're getting the services you need and if your current treatment is helping you.
- Psychiatric evaluation.
- Medication management.

These benefits are available to traditional Medicare Part B beneficiaries. If you are a part of a Medicare Advantage plan, you may have additional benefits. Contact your provider for more information.

If you have questions about what Medicare plan might be best for you or would like help navigating your Medicare benefits, you can contact the [Statewide Health Insurance Benefit Advisors](#) at **800-562-6900**.

What if I don't have insurance?

Because of social distancing rules and general practices to protect patients from contracting COVID-19, please call before you go into any doctor's office, hospital, clinic, or other health center. The health center may do patient assessments over the phone or using telehealth (online). You should also call first to find out whether COVID-19 screening and testing is available. If COVID-19 testing is available, people who are uninsured can get it for free.

- [Federally funded health centers](#) provide care regardless of whether your insurance covers them or whether you're able to pay. Many of these centers include mental health services.
- [Find a clinic](#) through the National Association of Free & Charitable Clinics
- [wa211.org](#) search your zip code for local resources, including affordable health clinics, housing, food, heating assistance, etc. You can also dial 211 from your phone for information on local resources.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR SENIORS

Seniors face additional threats to their mental health during this uncertain time, including social and physical isolation, loneliness, stigma, and lack of access to care and communication. Below are a few resources for older adults to be aware of.

- The **CDC** offers specific information for Older Adults on their page [here](#).
- **Medicare** has helpful information on COVID-19 on their [Medicare & Coronavirus](#) page.
- The **Indian Health Service** offers a publication on ways to support [Elder Mental Health](#) during COVID-19
- Washington State's Chapter of the **AARP** just launched [Community Connections](#), a mutual aid group serving seniors through volunteer coordination. Mutual aid can include picking up groceries, providing financial assistance, or lending emotional support to your neighbors.
 - Sometimes, just hearing a friendly voice on the other end of the line can help in challenging times. AARP Friendly Voices are trained AARP volunteers who will provide a call to say hello. You can schedule a call through their [Web Form](#), or by calling **888-281-0145**.
- **AARP** also hosts a series of webinars on topics of interest for older Americans. Their video [here](#) talks about tips to combat social isolation and loneliness.
- The **Institute on Aging** hosts a 24-hour toll-free [Friendship Line](#), staffed by volunteers who specialize in offering a caring ear and having a friendly conversation with depressed older adults. Call **800-971-0016**.

- The **Alzheimer's Association of Washington** has information on their [COVID-19: Resources for You](#) page.
 - The Association also has a 24/7 Helpline for people living with Alzheimer's, caregivers, families, and the public. You can reach the helpline at **(800) 272-3900**.
- The **National Council on Aging** has resources for older adults and caregivers on their web page [here](#).

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

Find more information on the **Veterans Administration (VA)** Mental Health services on their web page [here](#).

To connect with a Veterans Crisis Line responder anytime, day or night:

- Call 800-273-8255, then select 1
- [Start a confidential chat](#)
- Text [838255](#)
- If you have hearing loss, call TTY: [800-799-4889](#)

How do I schedule my first appointment?

If you're already using VA medical services, ask your primary care provider to help you make an appointment with a VA mental health provider.

If you're not already using VA medical services, contact your nearest VA medical center or Vet Center to talk about your needs.

[Find your nearest VA medical center or Vet Center](#)

What if I'm not sure what kind of help I need?

You can call [877-222-8387](#) to find the right resources for your needs Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET. If you have hearing loss, call TTY: [800-877-8339](#).

It's hard for me to get to a VA facility in person. Can I get mental health services online?

Yes. You may be able to use one or more of the care options listed below.

- **The Veteran Training online self-help portal for overcoming everyday challenges:** You can use [this portal's tools](#) to help manage your anger, develop parenting and problem-solving skills, and more. The tools are based on proven mental health practices that have successfully helped other Veterans and families. The portal is free, and you don't have to sign in or provide any

personal information to use the tools.

- **Smartphone apps for Veterans:** The VA partnered with the Department of Defense (DoD) to create free smartphone applications you can use to help manage your physical and mental health. These include apps to help you deal with stress, quit smoking, and more. [Learn more about apps for Veterans \(PDF\)](#)
- **The VA telemental health program:** You can connect with a VA mental health provider through a computer or mobile device in your home or at your nearest VA health facility. If you're enrolled in VA health care, ask any of your providers to help connect you with our telemental health program.

Other resources for Veterans

- The **Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs** has information on local resources on their [Counseling and Wellness](#) page.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES

- The **CDC** offers a guide on [Talking with Children about Coronavirus Disease](#).
- “[Why Are We All Stuck Inside?](#)” is a guide for how to speak with children on the pandemic.
- **Seattle Children’s Hospital** has a Mental Health Referral Service for Children and Teens, who can link you to providers in your local area who fit your child’s special needs and insurance coverage.
 - Call **833-303-5437** Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 - Have your insurance card handy and helpful information about your child’s diagnosis.
 - Complete an [online request](#) and a referral specialist will call you.
- Find more family resources on the **Governor’s** [Coronavirus Web Page](#).
- **Voices of Youth** collects and publicizes stories, illustrations, and messages of support shared by youth around the world to help young people know that they are not alone. You can find their web page [here](#).
- **Teen Link: 866-833-6546**. Chatting and texting options are also available.
- The **National Child Traumatic Stress Network** has [this guide](#) for parents and caregivers on helping families cope with stress.
- The **Institute for Disaster Mental Health** offers [this guide](#) for families on managing relationships during quarantine.

The **American Psychological Association** suggests [this guide](#) for students coping with COVID-19-related stress.