



The Effect of COVID-19 on Mental Health

By Caitlyn Conville

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everything from public health to the economy, but it is more important than ever to make sure that mental health does not take a backseat.

In the midst of self-quarantining, people are beginning to feel more depressed, anxious, and lonely. [A KFF Tracking Poll](#) conducted March 25th-30th, 2020 found that “47% of those sheltering in place reported negative mental health effects resulting from worry or stress related to coronavirus.”

In March alone, four organizations - [Crisis Text Line](#), [Kids Help Phone](#), [Shout](#), and [SpunOut.ie](#) - that offer free confidential crisis intervention and text messaging counseling “experienced a collective 40% increase in volume... due to COVID-19.”

It is no surprise that mental health conditions can lead to a troubling number of negative effects on a person’s thoughts, emotions, and behavior. And seeing as mental and physical health go hand in hand, the world does not have to be any sicker than it already is.

That’s why the four aforementioned organizations have come together to create [The Mental Health Fund](#). The fund “aims to support the work of each organization as they grow to meet the increased demand of people in crisis.” No one has to struggle to cope with the challenges they face on their own. We may be isolated, but we are not alone.

You can help these charities in their efforts to support and comfort people in pain by donating to The Mental Health Fund. Or you can assist directly by becoming a crisis counselor volunteer yourself.

Reach out to your loved ones, make sure they are faring well during these unprecedented times. If you find your own mental health slipping, there are steps you can take to prioritize its improvement.

First, take a break from social media and limit news consumption. Obsessively checking for updates will only repeatedly trigger stress.

Talk to people. Venting alleviates tension and stress. Don't be afraid to bend the ear of a friend, a family member, a therapist, or even newfound alliances on online peer support communities such as [ForLikeMinds](#) and [7 Cups](#). That is what they are there for, and you can return the favor by being a good listener when they need you.

If no one is available, write in a journal. Not only will it allow you to just get all the stress out of your head and onto the page, but it might make for an insightful read years down the line. After all, we are living through history.

When in doubt, turn to good ol' fashioned distraction. Now's the time to watch those movies and read those books that you have not gotten around to checking out. Board games are classic fun, and video games take things to the next level. No console? No problem. There are tons of web browser-based games you can play by yourself or with others, like [Cookie Clicker](#), [2048](#), [Slither.io](#), [Cursors.io](#), and [Geoguessr](#).

Pick one room in the house to declutter - it will get your brain and your body active, and by stretching the cleaning process across several days, you will guarantee something productive to do for at least a week. Plus, staying organized has been proven to have psychological benefits.

Finally, understand that it is okay to feel the way you feel. No one person is going through the same experience, and you are within your right to feel as sad, angry, tired, or isolated as you are. Take good care of your mental health and the mental health of others, because you are important. As long as we have our minds in check, we can fight back against COVID-19.

Photo by [Sasha Freemind](#) on Unsplash