

Coping with Trauma Amidst Covid-19

A Resource Guide

The Covid-19 crisis has brought health, wellness, and bodily safety to the forefront of most everyone's mind. It has also caused huge upheaval in our day to day lives, and has required all of us to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances and environments. This experience can be particularly impactful for those who have a history of other related or unrelated traumatic experiences, because of the way it has disrupted our personal sense of safety, routine, and made familiar methods of coping and accessing support systems difficult or impossible.

A trauma can be broadly understood as an event, experience, or set of circumstances that disturbs one's foundational sense of safety and security. A loss of control factors significantly in a lot of traumatic experiences, and for many, recovering and healing from trauma centers on re-establishing that control over one's sense of safety and security. Often this is done by starting new habits to care for oneself, establishing a predictable and comforting routine, and building a network of support that one can turn to when needed. All of these things can help reinforce that fundamental sense of safety that is key to healing from trauma. At the same time, these are the things that may have been upended by our current collective circumstances.

In this way, the Covid-19 crisis may have significantly altered the day-to-day routine that you relied on in your healing. Widespread and increasingly urgent messages about what is safe to do can cause you to feel unsettled in places that were safe havens before – your home, your classroom, your workplace. It could be requiring you to move into an unexpected housing circumstance that is not ideal, or possibly outright harmful. At the same time, traditional support systems such as group or individual counseling, affinity groups, or student clubs, can become much more difficult to access.

All of these factors converging at once can bring previous trauma to the surface. How our bodies respond to feeling unsafe now could feel really similar to or bring up memories or sensations of previous trauma reactions, even if they are completely unrelated to what we're currently going through. Some common symptoms of trauma that you may be noticing in yourself could include hypervigilance – being overly aware of potential danger or threats; sensitivity to stimuli like noise or light; or emotional dysregulation, mood swings, or having more difficulty regulating your emotions. All of these are normal ways bodies react to trauma and stress.

The good news is that human beings have an awe-inspiring capacity for resilience and strength in the face of adversity. If you are reading this, you are testament to that will to heal and to get through. You have been through something painful before and you have survived; you can do that again. As you navigate establishing a new structure for healing and coping in these unpredictable times, the following tips and strategies are offered, as well as some resources and apps that may be useful for you during this time.

As always, the therapists and health care providers at Emmons are here to support your physical and mental health (both near and far) as we navigate this new path together.

Focus on What You Can Control: Tips and Strategies to Manage Stress

- ✓ **Attend to your body's needs.** Emotions reside in our bodies, so take good care of yours! Get plenty of sleep, eat nutritious food, and make time for physical activity, even if just a walk around the block. All of these things help both the body and mind ward off disease and distress.
- ✓ **Be careful of Covid-19 news overload and misinformation.** There's a lot of info coming out all the time and it can be downright overwhelming. Limit the amount of time you spend checking the news, and the number of times per day. You can get all the updates you need by checking in once or twice a day, so add a set amount of time for news update into your daily schedule.

- ✓ **Establish a new routine/schedule.** A routine is helpful in creating a sense of safety. Setting standard meal times to help schedule your day. A set bed time and a set wake up time. Schedule video calls with friends or carve out dedicated time to work on a personal project.
- ✓ **Social connection is really good for us too!** Maintain physical distance, of course, but stay in touch with friends. You can do so via various virtual platforms, such as FaceTime.
- ✓ **Consider keeping a journal about what this experience is like for you.** But be sure to end your daily entry with 3 good things about the day, however small, to help keep your spirits up. You may also consider noticing 3 things you're grateful for at the end of every day.
- ✓ **Maintain perspective.** While this is a HUGE event for all of us, remind yourself of what's good in your life and what's important: for example, health, friends, being able to continue towards your degree, and/or spirituality.
- ✓ **Spend time with your four-legged friends.** Some snuggle time with your pets can make a tough day a lot easier.
- ✓ **Take the focus off of yourself: do something kind for someone else.** If you can't visit in person, call!
- ✓ **Consider making use on one of the many mental health apps that are available for free and for pay.** A selection are listed below, or you might find [this link](#) helpful in finding something that speaks to you.
- ✓ **Practice deep breathing, relaxation, yoga, Qigong.** Not sure how to do these? YouTube!!

Apps and tools for mindfulness, yoga, mood tracking, meditation, and more.

[Breathe2Relax](#)
[Tactical Breather](#)
[Daily Yoga](#)
[Calm](#)

[PTSD Coach](#)
[T2 Mood Tracker](#)
[Headspace](#)
[iChill](#)

Articles

[Managing Stress and Anxiety](#)
[88 ways to not freak the f*ck out during isolation](#)
[21 Ways We Can Soothe Ourselves From Our Homes](#)
[17 self care ideas for anyone staying home](#)
[For sexual trauma survivors, the COVID-19 pandemic can be triggering, calming, and everything in between](#)
[How to Have Sex in the Covid-19 Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
[Consent Contagion and Connection](#)
[Info for Survivors on Staying Safe During Covid-19 for the National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)

Immediate Support

Need to talk to someone right now? The following hotlines/text lines are available 24/7 with trained counselors available to connect.

- ✓ Oxy 24/7 Confidential Helpline: 323-341-4141
- ✓ LA Rape and Battering Hotline: 213-626-3393
- ✓ National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
- ✓ The Trevor Project Hotline: 1-866-488-7386
- ✓ Crisis Text Line: text 741-741 from anywhere in the USA, anytime, about any type of crisis.