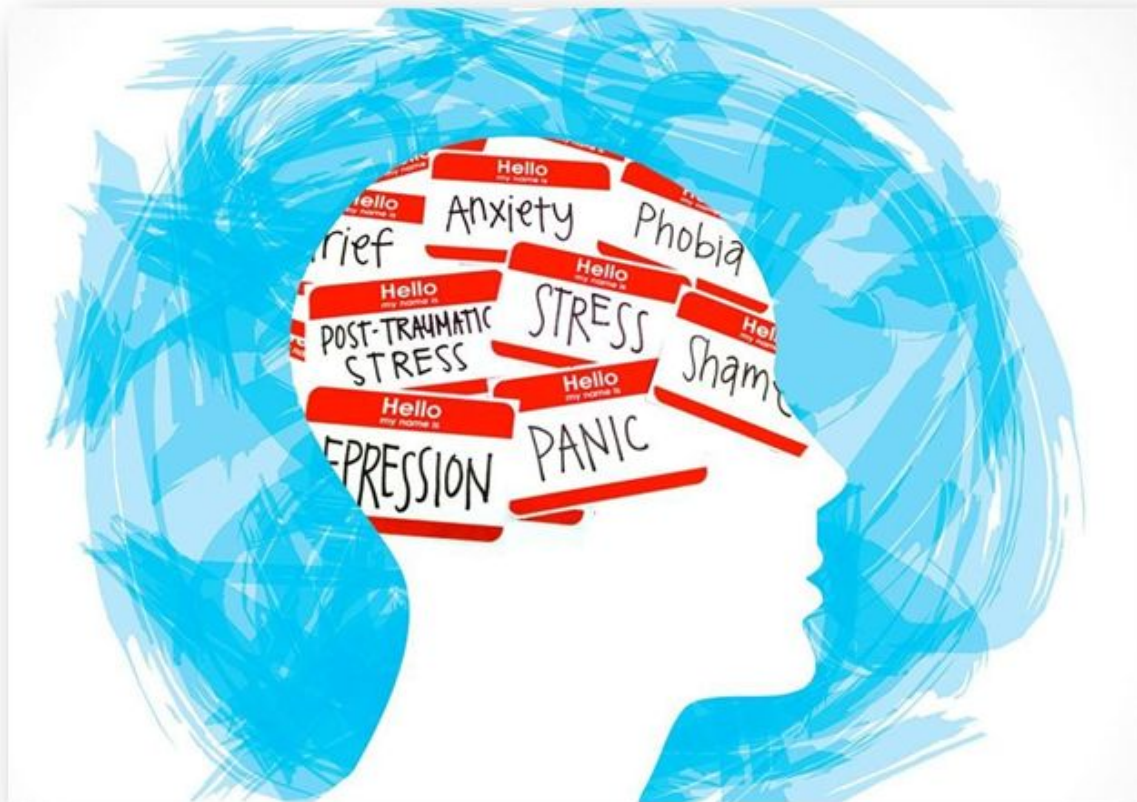


# COVID-19 School Closure: Mental Health Resources



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# A Note

The current pandemic, as a result of the novel coronavirus, which causes the disease COVID-19, has forced many of us to adjust to a new normal. If you have questions about the virus itself, (i.e. what is it, who can get it, how is it affecting people, and how to prevent it) please click [here](#). The CDC continues to be a great resource, updating their site almost daily to provide readers with the most accurate information. In addition, Gundersen Health System has been updating the public with current medical advancements and preventative actions you may be interested in learning about as well. If you would like more information, click [here](#).

School as you know it has transitioned from a traditional classroom setting to your dining room table, couch, or even a parking lot outside the public library. Wherever you're engaging in school, (and if no one has told you yet) keep it up, you're doing great. The reality of the situation is, we don't know how long this pandemic could last. That's a scary thought. The good news is, we're in this together. We're all experiencing various degrees of fear, distress, isolation, and anxiety. Whatever you are feeling, it's okay and you are not alone. I need you to understand that: You are not alone.

Because of the growing uncertainty, your administration has asked me and others to compile resources that will hopefully serve to alleviate some of the emotions you're feeling.

# For Students/Parents/Guardians

## **Adjusting to a New Normal:**

**Home is where I want to be:** Except when I want to be legitimately anywhere else. In light of social distancing, our governor has issued an Executive Order, which indicates all individuals present within the State of Wisconsin stay at home or place of residence until April, 24<sup>th</sup> 2020 ([Emergency Order #12 Safer at Home Order, State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)). This means a few things. Firstly, for the next 30 days, all non-essential (i.e. those who do not have essential jobs or travel specifically listed as exempt in the previous Emergency Order) individuals will remain at their place of residence. Secondly, it means your Netflix account is going to get a workout for the next 30 days. Lastly, it means you need to be prepared to create a New Normal.

**Yes please tell me about that:** Unfortunately, loss is something humans are not innately equipped to deal with. Most of us deal with loss poorly. COVID-19 has shaken our sense of routine and safety, as you, and perhaps many people around you, are dealing with the loss of person-to-person interaction, scheduled appointments/events, jobs and careers, or financial certainty. In order to persevere, we need to create a New Normal that is realistic and healthy.

**We're picking up what you're putting down:** So let's consider "Normal." It's a mindset, a state of being, and a language. Almost all of us spend some portion of our lives wondering if we're normal. When we consider what is normal, it's often in the sense of determining whether the way we think and act is the same as—or at least similar to—the majority of other people. Therefore, we say things like, "It was a normal day," or "I'm feeling pretty normal." As if we could ever accurately gauge what normal is. Thus, our sense of normal is based on our senses, values, and core beliefs. We get up every day expecting to endure a normal day with our (mostly) normal peers. So what happens when our sense of normal is disturbed? We, my resilient friends, create a New Normal.

**Cool philosophy lesson:** Thanks. Let's talk about how to create a New Normal. Cue [David Bowie's "Changes"](#):

- **Routine:** Though laying in bed all day, bingeing The Office on Netflix for the 7<sup>th</sup> time may sound fun, it's not a healthy routine. To be clear, I'm not suggesting you wait outside your home until 7:50 a.m., burst through the front door, and immediately ask your parent to go to the bathroom because you had absolutely no time before class. Rather, let's consider implementing a normal morning routine, followed by a normal "lunch hour," and finally engaging in a normal before bed routine.
  - [How to: How to Start a New Routine and Stick to It](#)
  - [How to: 18 Tricks to Make New Habits Stick](#)
  - [Listen: NPR on Tips for Homeschooling during Coronavirus](#)
  - [A New Routine: Activities for Family Fun at Home during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)
  - [Watch: A Simple Guide to Working/Learning from Home: How to Adjust \(ADHD\)](#)
  
- **Manage your own anxiety:** Research has shown that some amount stress in small amounts (acute stress) is actually good for us. Think: the anxiety we get before taking a test or the uncertainty we feel before a big 5K. That stress we feel encourages us to prepare and work harder. However, *chronic stress* can have negative consequences on us. Think: digestive complications, decreased immune system response, increased sleep dysregulation, and onset of various cognitive symptoms, including forgetfulness or inability to focus. Because of this, it's important for us to consider our own needs during this time of distress and uncertainty. This concept is called: Self-Care. Furthermore, your anxiety has the power to affect those around you, especially your children. Remember that children tend to take their cues from their parents about how scary a situation is. Be mindful of what conversations children are hearing in order to provide reassurance to your children and those around you.
  - [Article: Anxiety Symptoms in Children](#)
  - [Article: Angry Kids: Dealing with Explosive Behavior](#)
  - [Article: 6 Hidden Signs of Teen Anxiety](#)
  - [Limit COVID-19 Information Intake to Help Minimize Anxiety](#)
  - [Article & Listen: WPR on How Parents can Help Lesson Children's Anxieties about COVID-19](#)
  - [Article: VICE News on My Biggest Coronavirus Fear is my Kid's Mental Health](#)
  - [Quiz: If You can Answer Yes to any of These 5 Questions, Your Emotional Intelligence is Perfectly Suited for This Crisis](#)

- **Help me, I'm poor:** Me too. I recognize that it is really hard to focus on mental health and self-care needs when financial stability is put into question. Though I am no financial advisor, I consider myself an expert at scouring the web to find useless (and sometimes useful) resources for people. Here are some resources that you may find useful (or not).
  - [Article: UW-Madison on Financial Resources to Help get through COVID-19](#)
  - [Resource: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Small Business Guidance & Loan Resources](#)
  
- **Keep busy:** Now is not the time to be stationary. Rather, this is the perfect time to stay involved and maybe get involved in new ways.
  - [Article: 10 of the Most Anticipated Book Releases of March 2020](#)
  - [Article: 39 Shows with more than 100 Episodes that you can Stream Right Now](#)
  - [Article: Fees Waived for Wisconsin State Parks and Trails](#)
  - [Article: How to Be a Good Neighbor Right Now](#)
  - [Learn: Zoom Support during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
  - [How To: Gundersen Health on How To make a Face Mask](#)
  - [Watch: How To make a Face Mask](#)
  - [Article: Virtual Volunteering: Ways to Volunteer from Home during the Coronavirus Outbreak](#)
  - [Article: Where to Donate Medical Supplies, Help Restaurants and People in Need](#)
  - [To Do: All Museums Exhibits, Symphonies, and Operas You can Enjoy from Home](#)
  - [To Do: Armchair Travel on Traveling without Leaving Home](#)
  - [What To Watch: 10 Travel Shows to Watch on Netflix Right Now](#)
  - [To Do: 12 Virtual Vacations you can take Right Now from the Comfort of Your Own Home](#)
  - [Watch: Real Wild: Oddest Friendships Between Animals](#)

## **Self-Help Resources:**

- **Self-Care:**

- **What it is:** A very wise supervisor once told me, “Self-care is more than chocolate cake and bubble baths, but they are good places to start.” Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Although it’s a simple concept in theory, it’s something we very often overlook. Good self-care is key to improved mood and reduce anxiety. It’s also key to a good relationship with oneself and others.
- **What it’s not:** It is not something that we force ourselves to do, or something we don’t enjoy doing. Self-care is something that refuels us, rather than takes from us. Self-care isn’t a selfish act either. It is not only about considering our needs; it is rather about knowing what we need to do in order to take care of ourselves, being subsequently, able to take care of others as well. That is, if I don’t take enough care of myself, I won’t be in the place to give to my loved ones either.

**Que:** [The airplane rule.](#)

- [Assessment: How is your Self-Care?](#)
- [Article: Building a Self-Care Plan](#)
- [Template: Self-Care Plan](#)
- [Template: Self-Care Plan](#)

- **Mindfulness:**

- **What it is:** Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we’re doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what’s going on around us. Mindfulness is a quality that every human being already possesses, it’s not something you have to conjure up, you just have to learn how to access it.

- [Practice: How to and guided breathing exercise](#)
- [Practice: How to and Mindfulness activities](#)
- [Activities: Mindfulness Exercises for Children](#)
- [Article & Listen: WPR on Parenting with Mindfulness](#)
- [Listen: WPR on Mindfulness for Beginners](#)

- **Body-Scans:**

- **What it is:** Body scan meditation is a good way to release tension you might not even realize you're experiencing. Body scanning involves paying attention to parts of the body and bodily sensations in a gradual sequence from feet to head.

- [Listen & Practice: Body Scan \(For young children\)](#)
- [Listen & Practice: 30-Min Body Scan for Beginners](#)
- [Listen & Practice: UCLA Mindfulness Practices](#)

- **Quieting Negative Self-Talk:**

- **What's the tea?** Negative self-talk can take many forms. It can sound grounded ("I'm not good at this, so I should avoid attempting it for my own personal safety," for example) or it can sound downright mean ("I can never do anything right!"). It may take on the feel of being a realistic appraisal of a situation ("I just got a "C" on this test. I guess I'm not good at math."), only to devolve into a fear-based fantasy ("I'll probably fail this class and never be able to go to a good college.").

- [Watch: TEDxTalks on Negative Thoughts](#)
- [Watch: TEDxTalks on Positive Psychology](#)
- [Worksheet: Dysfunctional Thought Record](#)
- [Worksheet: Challenging Negative Thoughts](#)
- [Worksheet: Putting Thoughts on Trial](#)
- [Worksheet: Cognitive Restructuring](#)
- [Watch: How do I create a suicide safety plan?](#)

- **Drawing, Coloring & Journaling:**

- **What's the tea?** Drawing and coloring are interventions used often in mindfulness. By putting pencil to paper, crayon to paper, or marker to paper, you give your brain an opportunity to slow down and process what is happening. Working creatively assists us in organizing our thoughts and feelings to facilitate clear thinking and better decision-making abilities. It increases our self-awareness and releases tension and built up emotions in safe manners.

- [Consider & Journal: The Miracle Question](#)
- [Consider & Journal: Journal Prompts](#)
- [Color: Mandala Coloring Pages](#)
- [Journal: Gratitude Journal: Three good things](#)

- **Personal Favorite Interventions:**

- **Therapists aren't supposed to pick favorites:** But we all do anyway. Here are some of my favorite and easy (and cheap) interventions I like to do with students in my office.
- [ALGEE: Mental Health First Aid's—5 step action plan](#)
  - Useful for assessing risk level
- [All the Balloon Activities](#)
  - Useful for students who need to express anger
- [The Feel Good File](#)
  - Useful to enhance self-esteem
- [Feelings Hide and Seek](#) (I use index cards with words or pictures to replace these little emotion creatures)
  - Useful to learn/normalize emotions



- [Red Light, Green Light](#)
  - Useful to increase self-awareness and self-regulation
- [What Would They Say?](#)
  - Useful to assess family dynamics and increase open communication
- [Watch: Guess the Sound Game](#)
  - Useful to increase focus/attention
- [Watch: The Noise in your Head: Episodes 1-6](#)
  - Useful to assist students cope with anxiety and persistent worries (NOTE: some episodes use minor profanity)

# Crisis/Community Resources:

## [Gundersen St. Joseph's Hospital and Clinics](#)

**Contact:** In an emergency, always call 911. For more information on Emergency Services, please call (608) 489-8000.

Call: (608) 489-8000

Email: [contactus@gundersenhealth.org](mailto:contactus@gundersenhealth.org)

MyCare: <https://mycare.gundersenhealth.org>

MyCare How To: <https://www.gundersenhealth.org/patients-visitors/mycare/>

## [The Pauquette Center](#)

**About:** The Pauquette Center for Psychological Services has been serving the community for over 50 years. As of 2019 we have mental health clinics in Portage, Columbus, Richland Center, Prairie du Sac, Reedsburg, Baraboo and Madison. We provide services for depression, anxiety, addiction, and so much more. We are compassionate professionals ready to serve your psychological needs.

**Contact:** Call: 608-742-5518

Email: [info@pauquette.com](mailto:info@pauquette.com)

For more contact information: <https://pauquette.com/contact-us/>

## [Passages](#)

**About:** Passages has a 20 bed Shelter for individuals needing emergency safety housing.

Passages also operates a 16 unit housing complex for families coming through the shelter or for families with low income. Passages also offers options counseling in the areas of; medical, legal advocacy, sexual and domestic assault services, and youth services.

**Contact:** Call (Office): 608-647-8775

Call (Shelter): 608-647-6317

Call (Toll Free): 800-236-4325

Email: [business@mwt.net](mailto:business@mwt.net)

## [Vernon County: DHS](#)

**About:** The Vernon County Department of Human Services is a professional agency that recognizes local needs, adheres to state and federal laws, and operates in a fiscally responsible manner. The mission of Vernon County Department of Human Services is to promote the health, safety, and well-being of Vernon County residents by providing resources and services in partnership with community agencies to strengthen individuals and families and promote independence.

**Contact:** Call: 608-637-5210

Call (Emergency After Hours): 608-637-2123

#### [Vernon County: Public Health Department](#)

**About:** The mission of the Vernon County Health Department is to protect a healthy community.

**Contact:** Call: 608-637-5251

Email: [health@vernoncounty.org](mailto:health@vernoncounty.org)

Stay up-to-date on issues regarding COVID-19 specifically affecting Vernon County:

[https://www.vernoncounty.org/alert\\_detail.php](https://www.vernoncounty.org/alert_detail.php)

#### [Juneau County: DHS](#)

**About:** Our vision is to promote safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency for individuals and families in Juneau County.

**Contact:** Call: 608-847-2400

Call Crisis Line (8:00a.m. – 4:30p.m.): 608-847-2400 Ask to speak with a crisis worker

Call After Hours: 608-847-6161 Ask to speak with a crisis worker

#### [Juneau County: Health Department](#)

**About:** To nurture, protect, and promote health and wellness in our community.

**Contact:** Call: 608-847-9373

Stay up-to-date on issues regarding COVID-19 specifically affecting Juneau County:

<http://www.co.juneau.wi.gov/emergency-information.html>

#### [Monroe County: DHS](#)

**About:** The mission of the Monroe County Department of Human Services is to serve people, with an emphasis on Monroe County residents, by empowering participant responsibility and choice toward safe and independent lifestyles through the delivery of services in response to assessed needs. It intends to achieve this mission through providing public awareness, resource and referral information, economic support, and direct provision of services in a fiscally responsible manner.

**Contact:** Call: 608-269-8600

Email: [rhamilton@co.monroe.wi.us](mailto:rhamilton@co.monroe.wi.us)

#### [Monroe County: Health Department](#)

**About:** To protect, promote and improve the health of county residents.

**Contact:** Call: 608-269-8666

Email: [Sharon.nelson@co.monroe.wi.us](mailto:Sharon.nelson@co.monroe.wi.us)

Call (Emergency After Hours): 609-269-2117

Stay up-to-date on issues regarding COVID-19 specifically affecting Monroe County:

<http://healthymonroecowi.org/covid-19/>

### [Richland County: Health and Human Services](#)

**About:** Richland County Health & Human Services is dedicated to helping those in our county to access public resources, which will help them prosper and have more independent, fulfilling lives. It is our mission to provide these resources in a way that promotes the health, well-being, & self-sufficiency for all people of Richland County. The Richland County Department of Health and Human Services provides a comprehensive array of services and programs consumers in Richland County each year.

**Contact:** Call: 608-647-8821

Call (For Emergency Services): 888-552-6642

Call (Richland Co Sheriff's Dept/On-Call Worker): 608-647-2106

### [Behavioral Health Services Brochure](#)

Stay up-to-date on issues regarding COVID-19 specifically affecting Richland County:

<https://www.co.richland.wi.us/departments/hhs/publichealth/coronavirus.shtml>

### [211 Wisconsin](#)

**About:** 211 is a quick and easy way to find information and get referrals for thousands of programs and services across Wisconsin. Contrary to common belief, 211 is not just a crisis line. 211 can assist with connecting you to local services, like utility assistance, housing, food, crisis intervention, and more.

**Contact:** Call: 211

Text: 898211 (your ZIP Code)

IM: <https://home-c4.incontact.com/incontact/chatclient/index.html>

Email: <https://211wisconsin.communityos.org/contactus> by entering your home county

### [Northwest Connections](#)

**About:** Northwest Connections(NWC) provides Emergency Mental Health Services to contracted counties in WI. This program is a collaborative effort between those county partners, service providers and law enforcement. NWC's goal is to provide the least restrictive response to all crisis situations. Each county contracts for its specific service needs.

**Contact:** Call: 888-552-6642

### [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)

**About:** The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 150 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices.

**Contact:** Call: 1-800-273-8255

Call (Spanish): 1-888-628-9454

Call (Deaf/Hard of Hearing): 1-800-799-4889

### National Domestic Violence Hotline

**About:** We envision a world where all relationships are positive, healthy, and free from violence. We answer the call to support and shift power back to those affected by relationship abuse.

**Contact:** Call: 1-800-799-7233, or 1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

Call (for individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing): 1-800-787-3224

Video phone (Only for deaf callers): 1-855-1001

Website: <https://www.adwas.org>

Email: [nationaldeafhotline@adwas.org](mailto:nationaldeafhotline@adwas.org)

### Disaster Distress Helpline

**About:** SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline provides 24/7, 365-day-a-year crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.

**Contact:** Call: 1-800-985-5990

Text: **TalkWithUs** to 66746

Call (For spanish speakers): 1-800-985-5990 and press 2

Text (For spanish speakers): Hablanos to 66746