

## May 2020: Celebrating Mental Health Month

### The High Cost of Loneliness

Even before COVID-19, loneliness had become its own epidemic in recent years. Loneliness affects every group and poses a particular risk to seniors, people in the LGBTQ+ communities, immigrants, and others. Studies have shown that loneliness and isolation affect a person's health equivalent to obesity or smoking 15 cigarettes a day. The good news is that there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

### Start Keeping in Touch ... With Yourself

All of us have different social needs. Some of us find time alone soothing and necessary. Others feel trapped and stressed when alone for too long. It's important to check in with yourself and know how you're feeling.

### Stay Connected

Teddy Roosevelt famously said: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." We may not be able to engage in our favorite social

hobbies right now. We can't get hugs from friends. We have lost a lot of options for getting and giving comfort. However, we are lucky to live in a connected world. Most have access to phones and internet devices that will link you to the outside world. You can also look for creative ways to support others and get support.

Prioritize connection, even before you feel lonely. Plan to reach out to loved ones more than usual. Focus some on isolated seniors and young people living alone who are particularly at risk.

Install the **myStrength** app and check out the "Staying Connected While Social Distancing" activity for lots of options for staying in touch with others during this time.

### For individualized telephone wellness coaching call 1-866-251-4514

Topics include trying to get more active, eat better, manage your weight, quit tobacco, or handle stress, your personal coach can help you create—and stick with—a plan for reaching your goals. You and your coach talk one-on-one by phone convenient a time.



# MENTAL HEALTH

## Your Mind, Your Body

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Mental Health During COVID-19 *Issue, 2.*

### Reframing Staying Apart

The way we think about things is really impactful. Thoughts like, "I can't go anywhere", or "If I have to stay in my home for 2 weeks, I'm going to go crazy" can add fuel to the fire of loneliness.

You are justified in your feelings. But if your thoughts are making things worse, you may want to adjust them. Brainstorm why this isolation is important — if not to you, then for your community. Choose a thought that feels meaningful to you. An option that is aligned with your values is best. Here are some examples:

"I'm staying at home to do my part to prevent the spreading of this virus."  
"I'm going to use my time at home to tackle my spring-cleaning and get my space organized."  
"Staying home is my way of taking care of my community."

### Declare the Truth

Like many negative feelings, loneliness feeds on secrecy. If you are suffering, decide to share your situation with someone safe. Bringing up that you have been feeling lonely takes away some of the sting.

Who can you tell? If you're not sure, you can always contact the Crisis Text Line (text LIVONGO to 741-741) or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK).

### Self-Care

Practicing self-care is a great addition to your daily routine to support emotional wellness and your overall health. It can also help you navigate life's changes and challenges and bounce back after tough times. Self-care tools provide a simple and convenient way to help you:

- Sleep better.
- Improve focus.
- Strengthen relationships.
- Manage daily stressors.
- Build resilience.
- Develop coping skills.
- Feel mentally and emotional strong.

We offer a range of tools so you can find enjoyable activities that work for you. Try as many as you like that make you feel better. You have access to all of these via your phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer!

**myStrength App.** This is a cognitive behavioral therapy app that we've used with patients for nearly 2 years.

[Click here](#) to watch a 45 second video and learn more about myStrength. Our clinicians reviewed and chose myStrength for adult patients based on its effectiveness.

It's uniquely designed to provide personal inspiration, build resilience, and strengthen skills for strong mental health. Interested? [Click here](#) to get started.

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### Other Resources Available to You

**1:1 Wellness Coaching.** Talk with a wellness coach over the phone to build your motivation and create a customized plan to make lifestyle changes. [Click here](#) to find out more and set up an appointment

**Mindfulness & Stress.** Practicing mindfulness means being fully present in the moment. The goal is to be aware of your thoughts and feelings and accept them as they are – which can help you manage your emotions and feel happier and healthier overall.

[Click here](#) for more information and audio recordings to help you practice mindfulness.

[Click here](#) for additional articles on stress and tools to help relax and calm your mind and body.

**Call Kaiser San Francisco Health Education Department at (415) 833-3450 to register for online classes or e-mail to find out more: [SFHealthEd@kp.org](mailto:SFHealthEd@kp.org)**  
Hours: Monday - Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

**Clinical Care.** Remember, digital self-care tools aren't meant to take the place of clinical care. If you need help and support, please reach out. Millions of people seek mental health services every year. We offer many options for members with mental health, emotional, and addiction issues. We'll help you find care that works for you.

[Call us](#) and we'll assess your needs and discuss treatment options. You don't need a referral from your doctor to access mental health services.

If you have symptoms of anxiety or depression that are more severe, email your doctor or [local Mental Health Department](#). If you think you have a medical or psychiatric emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.

Other resources  
National Suicide Hotline: [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255)

