Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP COPE WITH EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

1. Manage Your Stress
   - Stay informed. Refer to credible sources for updates on the local situation.
   - Stay focused on your personal strengths.
   - Maintain a routine.
   - Make time to relax and rest.

2. Be Informed and Inform Your Family
   - Become familiar with local medical and mental health resources in your community. Attend community meetings for resources/education.
   - Avoid sharing unconfirmed news about the infectious disease to avoid creating unnecessary fear and panic.
   - Give honest age-appropriate information to children and remember to stay calm; children often feel what you feel.

3. Connect with Your Community
   - Keep contact with family and friends.
   - Join community and/or faith groups.
   - Accept help from family, friends, co-workers and clergy.
   - Reach out to neighbors and friends with special needs who may need your help.

4. Reach Out and Help
   - If you know someone affected by the outbreak, call them to see how they are doing, and remember to keep their confidentiality.
   - Consider an act of kindness for those who have been asked to practice social distancing, such as having a meal delivered or offering to drop off homework at their doorstep.
   - Locate and volunteer at a charity or organization near you.
   - Encourage friends and family to get involved with you.

5. Be Sensitive
   - Avoid blaming anyone or assuming someone has the disease because of the way they look or where they or their families come from.
   - An infectious disease is not connected to any racial or ethnic group; speak up in kindness when you hear false rumors or negative stereotypes that foster racism and xenophobia.

Consider seeking professional help if you or a loved one are having difficulty coping.