

Pandemic Flu Emotional Health Guide

As we prepare for a pandemic flu and become aware of its potential consequences, it is natural for our emotions to intensify. This guide provides some of the common indicators of various emotions and explains ways to deal with them before, during and after a pandemic event.

By understanding and preparing for how we will be affected by a flu pandemic, we stand a better chance of successfully responding to and surviving from those impacts on our lives. We will be affected in a wide variety of ways: physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. To offer a better picture of how a flu pandemic can affect us, the following is a list of some of the reactions we might experience:

FEELINGS	Shock, anger, guilt, terror, helplessness, despair
THOUGHTS	Confusion, memory loss, blaming, poor concentration
BEHAVIORS	Isolation, change in sleeping patterns & eating habits
PHYSICAL	Fatigue, headaches, hair loss, increased heartbeat, stomachaches
SPIRITUAL	Becoming close to God, withdrawing from God, anger at God

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW:

- **LEARN** what you can do in advance. Create a response plan and then lead your lives in a normal way.
- **BUILD** emotional health and strength into your family's lives by learning to identify and discuss emotions and positive ways to respond with healthy behaviors.
- **KNOW** that daily life may be significantly different during a pandemic. Doing something to help others helps us.
- **BE** involved in faith-based and other community groups and help plan ways those groups can continue working and serving.
- **WORK** with family members and friends who have special needs to help create or improve their personal emergency plans.
- **SEEK** support from family, friends and colleagues.
- **MAKE** use of available community services
- **CONTINUE** your daily schedule at work and leisure activities.
- **SEEK** professional mental health assistance if you feel depressed, a sense of hopelessness or extreme anger. There is help available to assist you in getting through.

See reverse side for a list of information and assistance resources.

TAKE ACTION

LEARN about social distancing practices that will assist in protecting us from infectious diseases; such as, maintaining three feet of distance between ourselves and others with infection.

PREVENT stigma by understanding those who will respond to person with the illness are working on our behalf and that those who have had the illness are no longer contagious.

PRACTICE stress management through exercise, prayer, meditation, deep breathing or relaxation activities. Take breaks from thinking about stressful issues and maintain a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

The following are resources that will assist you as you consider the emotional side of the pandemic flu:

www.pandemic.flu.gov

www.dmh.mo.gov (Coping with Disaster)

www.dhss.mo.gov

www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/dtac/commonstressreactions.asp

Resources for parents and caregivers of children who have experienced trauma --www.netsnet.org/nccts/nav.do?pid=ctr_and_prnt