



WWW.MESSAGESFORMOTHERS.CO.ZA

Dear Mothers in South Africa

We understand that the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) is a hard time for a lot of reasons. Many of us are worried – for our children, our families, for ourselves and for our future. Many of us feel very sad.

As mothers, we need to remind ourselves and each other that **we are not alone**.

Messages for Mothers (M4M) was created by a group of organisations that work closely with mothers. Together we started the M4M platform to support mothers, fathers and caregivers with messages on physical health, mental health, mindfulness and parenting, in different languages.

This pamphlet offers you some information on mental health. Talk about it with your family, friends and healthcare workers – what do you think?

We think you are important and valuable and deserve to be well and safe.

MANAGING STRESS AS A MOTHER DURING COVID-19

As a mother, you could be having a lot of stress and worries during COVID-19. Here are some tips for coping with stress during this time.

You can do this!

1. Notice, name and accept your feelings. These may be anger, sadness, worry, frustration or something else. They are normal reactions to an abnormal situation.
2. Limit how often you check the news if it is feeling too much.
3. Get your facts from reliable sources only. There is lot of fake news.
4. Do simple things to take your mind off this situation - like sing, dance, play with your children or cook.
5. Ask for support from family, friends or a counsellor.
6. If you can, helping others during this time can make you feel better.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE DEPRESSED?

It is normal to be worried during this difficult time of COVID-19. Sometimes the worry or stress, or just not being able to see other people, can lead to depression. How will you know if you are depressed?

Here are some things to look out for. If for most of the time and for more than two weeks:

- You feel down, very sad or hopeless
- You are 'thinking too much'
- You have very negative thoughts that upset you
- You feel that you do not want to talk to other people even though you could phone or WhatsApp them
- You feel that you do not want to do the usual things that you would do round the house, like get dressed, clean and cook
- You can't relax

If at anytime:

- You have thoughts or even plans to harm yourself or commit suicide

If you feel that you may be depressed, please speak to a counsellor, friend or family member or try the helplines on the back of this pamphlet.



www.pmhp.za.org

All the types of messages, can be found on the websites or on social media.
Please download, share and use them as share as you wish.

MANAGING DEPRESSION, ANXIETY OR ADDICTIONS DURING COVID-19

In the time of COVID-19, people who are already living with depression, anxiety or an addiction may be feeling worse. This is understandable.

1. If you are on **medication**, don't change it without talking with your doctor.
2. If you have a **counsellor**, make a plan to talk over the phone or online.
3. If you don't have a counsellor, and are feeling bad, phone a **helpline** - see options on back page.
4. Explore the **internet** for help online.
5. Remember **alcohol or drugs** will make you feel worse afterwards.
6. Get **support**. Reach out to friends and family online or on the phone.
7. **Look after yourself**. Say good things to yourself. You can get through this.

MANAGING FAMILY VIOLENCE DURING COVID-19

Being at home during COVID-19 can result in an increase in violence towards women and children. If you are facing violence, here are some tips for coping:

1. **Have a safety plan**
 - Keep your phone with you, charged and with airtime.
 - Put emergency numbers in your phone.
 - Think about where you can go to be safe
 - Have an emergency bag ready with your and your children's IDs, money and clothes.
 - Tell a friend that if you send them a danger code word or signal, then you need help urgently.
2. You can ask the police for a **protection order**.
3. **Self-care**. Get enough sleep, eat properly, exercise. Do what helps you to take your mind off the stress.
4. **Connect** with friends, family, a support group or a counsellor online or on the phone.

HELPLINES

(Keep trying. They may be busy.)

STRESS, WORRY, ANXIETY & DEPRESSION

- South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) www.sadag.org – has many help-lines 0800 21 22 23 or 0800 456 789 or 0800 20 5026 and others
- Lifeline general 0861 322 322 and their AIDS Helpline 0800 012 322
- Childline 0800 055 555

FAMILY VIOLENCE

- GBV Command Centre Call 0800 428 428; Send a "Please Call Me" by dialling *120*7867# SMS 'help' to 31531
- People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA) www.powa.co.za tel: 0800 029 999
- Lifeline's Domestic Violence line 0800 150 150
- Tears Foundation www.tears.co.za tell dial *134*7355# or 010 590 5920
- Rape Crisis 021 447 9762; WhatsApp 083 222 5164

ADDICTION

- SANCA for Alcohol and Drug problems WhatsApp line 076 535 1701

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

- SADAG Suicide Helpline 0800 567 567 or sms 31393. 7 days/week 8am to 8pm