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*Point of View:*

## **We Are Not Helpless. We Are Together!**

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Many of us are worried about COVID-19, and feel uncertain about what will happen or what we can do to help. In times like these, maintaining our mental wellness can be a challenge. Uncertainty about the virus may make us feel more insecure about other things, causing us to feel depressed and less motivated to carry out our daily activities, frustrated, on edge or helpless.

We aren't helpless. There are things we can do to reduce the feeling of uncertainty, and take care of our mental wellness. There are many great resources online that can help.

I recently saw some great suggestions from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and thought that sharing some of those things might be helpful:

1. **Focus on what you can control, and let go of what you can't.** We can control risk by washing our hands and reminding others to do so, limiting our and others exposure to disease through physical distance, maintaining social supports and being mindful of personal health.
2. **Do what you can do to be safe and feel secure.** Maybe you use online ordering, remote pick-up and delivery services. Perhaps you work remotely. This doesn't mean isolation. Stay connected by phone, texts and video chat.
3. **Get outside while still keeping a safe distance from others.** Take a walk, work in the yard or just step outside for fresh air and sunshine. The coming of spring provides warmer temperatures and a sense of hope.
4. **Exercise.** Exercise improves both physical and mental health. It rids your body of tension and your mind of stressful thoughts, decreases anxiety, and promotes a feeling of wellness. You can stay active without a gym.

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5. **Ground yourself in the here and now.** Be present and focus on immediate needs and not the future. When our worry about the future goes into overdrive, it is difficult to do anything. Breathe, notice sights and sounds, and remind yourself that you are here now and be in the moment.
  
6. **Find ways to stay connected to those you depend on for support, and don't be afraid to ask for help.** Talk to family and friends, and share your thoughts. Talking about things helps them feel more manageable. If needed, do not hesitate to reach out to a mental health professional. You don't have to be alone with your worry and it can be comforting to share what you are experiencing with those trained to help.

If you're feeling alone and struggling, you can reach out to The Crisis Text Line by texting TALK to 741741, call 1-800-273-TALK, or dial 211 (or, 800-522-9054) to find available services near you. While these may seem like distant services, you are talking and texting with persons right here in your community, ready and willing to help. In addition, you can go to the [ODMHSAS.org website](https://www.odmhsas.org) and click on the SAMHSA treatment services locator, enter your zip code, and find your nearest provider(s).

This is something that impacts us all, and we are going through this together. Know that people care and that there is help available.