

Using the Guiding Principles of Recovery to Cope During Physical Distancing

VISN 5 MIRECC: *Putting Recovery into Practice*



Adapting to a national emergency and maintaining physical distancing can be challenging to mental health. SAMHSA's ten guiding principles of recovery can provide direction for how to cope, even in these challenging times.

Hope

- It is important to foster hope: what makes you feel joyful and hopeful in difficult times?
- Remember that this won't last forever.
- Recognize that physical distancing right now is how we are taking care of ourselves and our community.

Person-Driven

- Think about what supports your wellness. Develop your own wellness toolbox.
- Try guided meditations and visualizations that work for you.
- Listen to music that you enjoy.

Many Pathways

- Be creative and flexible with managing your days.
- Think of new coping skills to replace pathways you don't have access to right now.
- It's a good time to revisit or create a Wellness Recovery Action Plan.

Holistic

- Establish a daily routine.
- Create physical activity daily — walks, strength, stretches.*
- Use mindfulness techniques, deep breathing, relaxation.
- Try to stay in the moment and focus on the present activity.
- If it's part of your wellness plan, use spiritual practice to help center yourself and bring you comfort.

*Consult with your physician prior to beginning any new exercise regimen.



[SAMHSA Recovery](#) : "A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential." p. 3

Peer Support

- Reach out to friends and family who have supported your recovery.
- Use phone, text, and video calling more than you usually would.
- Recognize that having peer support is part of self-care.

Relational

- Consider this as an opportunity for providing time and attention to certain relationships— including pets!
- Remember that physical distancing is not social isolation!
- Decreased social interaction can affect your mood- reach out to others in creative ways.
- Don't forget your "me time"!

Culture

- Remember that how each person processes this situation is unique and based on their culture and experiences.
- Individual and household culture can impact your mood and recovery.

Addresses Trauma

- For people with a history of trauma, times like these can be challenging.
- Reach out to your mental health providers as needed.
- Staying tuned to the news too much can be a trigger. Find an information balance that works for you.

Strengths/Responsibilities

- Challenging times are a good time to remind yourself of your strengths.
- Remember the challenges you have already overcome.
- Spend your free time doing things you are good at!
- Practice responsible distancing and remember you are contributing to the good of the community.

Respect

- Respect that everyone is processing this situation in their own way.
- Respect your own process, and remember that this takes courage!
- Respect that we are all doing the best we can.

If you are a Veteran in crisis or are concerned about one, contact:

[Veteran Crisis Line Website](#) or
Call: 1-800-273-8255, then Press 1

Additional Resources: Click Each

[12 Step Online Meetings](#)

[CDC: Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#)

[NCPTSD: Managing Stress During COVID-19](#)

[NAMI: COVID-19 Resource and Information Guide](#)

[SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline](#)

[SC MIRECC: Veteran Wellness Guide](#)

[VA App Store](#)

[Wellness Recovery Action Plan](#)