Using the Guiding Principles of Recovery to Cope During Physical Distancing

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.

**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
- SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline
- SC MIRECC: Veteran Wellness Guide
- VA App Store
- Wellness Recovery Action Plan