



SUPPORT FOR
INDIVIDUALS WITH
**SUBSTANCE
USE DISORDERS**
DURING COVID-19

During these uncertain times, people living with Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) including Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), may have difficulty managing their worries and substance use. We must acknowledge that stress and anxiety levels are increased for everyone, but for individuals with SUD/OUD these levels can feel like they are skyrocketing out of control.

You are not alone. There are many resources available, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. This kit is full of techniques to reframe thoughts of worry and feelings of stress, and resources to help cope with SUD/OUD while going through your recovery journey or while helping a loved one as they navigate their recovery. As you adjust strategies to fit within the restrictions of social distancing, this kit can help guide you to valuable support. Remember, you are not alone in any feelings you may have and there is help and hope for everyone.

Monitor yourself for signs of increased stress (distress reactions) and risky health behaviors (high risk behaviors). If you notice any of these reactions or behaviors, use the resources from this kit and contact your healthcare provider for additional assistance. Alert a family member or close friend to support you.

Distress Reactions

- Inability to concentrate
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs
- Social isolation
- Family conflict
- Connecting with those using alcohol and drugs
- Taking "extra" medication to ease stress
- Trading one addictive behavior for another
- Working extra or inability to focus on work

High Risk Behaviors

- Insomnia or excessive sleepiness
- Loss of appetite or over-eating
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Scapegoating - placing blame on others
- Decreased feeling of safety
- Loss of self-worth and seeking others' approval

COVID-19 Illness in People with SUD/OD

Be aware that some early symptoms of withdrawal from substances like opioids are similar to signs of COVID-19 infection. These include fever and muscle soreness. If symptoms include a persistent cough, fever or shortness of breath, it could be COVID-19. Contact your healthcare provider if you are concerned about COVID-19 illness and follow their medical advice.



Feeling under the weather? If you think you are sick or becoming sick, avoid leaving home except to get medical care. Please let others know you are sick with virus symptoms so they can take steps to keep themselves safe.

Increased risk of serious illness related to COVID-19 – this illness attacks the lungs (respiratory system). SUD / OUD actions increase the chance for serious breathing issues and possibly death including:

- Using opioids, benzos and alcohol
- Smoking including drugs like marijuana, crack and methamphetamines.

Weakened immune systems – People who use drugs, and the people in their lives, commonly have weaker immune systems, respiratory (breathing) problems, and other conditions that place them at a higher risk of COVID-19 infection and serious consequences.

Isolation during COVID-19 – This can increase stress and the chance of substance use, addiction and relapse.

Housing instability – Individuals with SUD/OD are more likely to experience homelessness or incarceration. These both increase the risk for exposure to COVID-19.

Alcohol use during COVID-19 – Consuming alcohol does not destroy the virus. It actually weakens your ability to recover from infections.

Smoking during COVID-19 – COVID-19 makes inhaling difficult and will worsen breathing problems. This will also make smoking difficult, including cigarettes, vape, marijuana, crack or, methamphetamines. These substances will worsen the effects of COVID-19 on your lungs and breathing.

Harm Reduction

Do what you can to avoid withdrawal. Talk to your doctor to see if starting medications like methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone is right for you. You may be able to have a first appointment by video.



Stock up on supplies in case of withdrawal.



- Protein-based (Ensure)
- Electrolyte drinks (Gatorade or Pedialyte)



Practice harm reduction techniques and have supplies on hand for substance use management. Remember, if you are sick, you will not be able to leave your home.



Adapting Recovery Strategies During COVID-19



We all look forward to sitting together soon, but there are many ways to adapt for now. By reaching out to your support networks regularly and taking care of yourself and your family, we get one step closer to those reunions.

-  **My support network has fallen apart.**
-  The support you had before has not vanished - it has changed, and this is temporary. Keep in touch with people through text messages, phone calls, and video chats. Check in with your support groups often, many have virtual meetings instead of in-person.

-  **I can't see my doctor.**
-  Many offices and recovery centers are offering tele-medicine visits for you to see your doctor 'face to face' via your smart phone. If you do not have a smart device, some have phone call meetings as well.

-  **I can't manage my stress.**
-  Try new techniques like mindfulness, meditation, slow and deep breathing, stretching, exercise, yoga, outdoor walks, etc. [See page 6 for more.](#)

-  **I can't go to meetings or support groups.**
-  Online and virtual meetings are available throughout the state. [See page 7 for resources.](#)

-  **I can't get my SUD or OUD medications.**
-  Contact your provider. Most are still providing services that comply with social distancing and can arrange for you to pick up your medications safely.

You're Never Alone




Get immediate crisis counseling 24/7 if you're feeling distress.

National Disaster Distress Helpline

- 1-800-985-5990

Michigan Crisis Text Line


- Text RESTORE to 741741



Get immediate support 24/7 if you're having thoughts of suicide.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- 1-800-273-8255
- Text TALK to 741741



Talk to peers with shared experiences about your recovery and COVID-19.

Michigan Peer Warmline

- 888-733-7753
- Daily 10 a.m. - 2 a.m.

Building Resilience During COVID-19

As you cope with SUD/OD, you may feel overwhelmed by stress related to COVID-19. Something very powerful to remember: you have had challenges before and successfully gotten through them. Draw from these past experiences and create a stress resilience plan to help get through new challenges. No one has all the answers or has a failproof plan. Be patient - remind yourself of all the good things you have done and are doing, and all the ways you can adapt and strengthen your resilience. This will benefit you now, and as you face challenges in the future.

Use the checklist on page 5 to create your stress resilience plan.

Caring for Your Mental Health During COVID-19

Anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders often accompany SUD and OD. The stress of COVID-19 can push anyone beyond their typical coping mechanisms, but especially those living with mental health disorders and SUD/OD. There are many resources available to help you cope with stress.

It is so important to seek healthy activities, find ways to decrease and manage stress, and cope with worries and fears early on. Try several techniques - discover activities you enjoy and that work for you.

Find mindfulness techniques on page 6.



Resilience is the ability to adapt successfully in the face of trauma, adversity, tragedy or significant threat.

COVID-19 Mental Health Resource Hub:

psychhub.com/covid-19

Depression and BiPolar Support Alliance:

dbsalliance.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness:

nami.org/covid-19

National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder:

ptsd.va.gov/

Stress Resilience Plan

Think about how you overcame challenges in the past.

- How did you get started?
- How did you stay motivated to continue your recovery?
- Who was supportive during difficult times in the past? Reach out to them for support now.
- What useful advice did someone give you that can be shared with someone else in need of help?
- Keep using your resources - people, skills, and groups.
- Know your personal signs of stress - act to reduce stress before it spins out of control.

Take care of your mental health.

- Keep in touch with family and friends. Reach out by text, calls, or video chats.
- Try humor to reduce stress - when appropriate.
- Give yourself permission to feel upset or scared.
- Schedule check-ins with supporters.
- Limit media exposure: take time daily to digitally unplug.

Take care of your physical health.

- Eat healthy: vegetables, protein and water while limiting sugar and caffeine to regulate mood and energy.
- Exercise: try an online class or tutorial for yoga. Take a walk or hike to regulate stress and promote mindfulness.
- Sleep: get adequate rest daily.
- Self-care: what do I do regularly for self-care? Can I add more activity to my routine?

Create routine and structure.

- Keep a daily routine as much as possible. This helps curb stress.
- Maintain your sleep cycle - consistent times to wake up and go to sleep.
- What is the best time of day for you to exercise? Plan daily and weekly exercise.
- When is it easiest to get in touch with others? Schedule calls and virtual meetings.
- Plan time to get outside every day.

Simple Mindfulness Techniques

Mindfulness is one way to lessen the effects of stress – emotionally and physically. These techniques promote being present, in the moment, and mindful.



Sit outside in the sun. Feel the heat of the rays on you. Appreciate how far the rays have traveled just to reach you.



Walk around. Feel as much as you can - notice the grass, pebbles, or soft carpet under your feet.



Deep breathing. Take long, slow breaths at the top of the hour, or set a reminder on your phone throughout the day.



Look at the night sky. Appreciate how delicate the stars and moon appear. Admire the twinkling light - maybe notice a satellite or shooting star.



Sit quietly. Feel the breath coming and going from your chest, through your nose. Feel how the breath is cool as you inhale and warm as you exhale.



Write in a journal. Write down happy moments you can look back on when you're feeling anxious or stressed. Acknowledge the appreciation you feel for the things around you.

Grounding Technique

A grounding technique can help decrease anxiety and anger when you are feeling overwhelmed.

Think 5-4-3-2-1 as you notice:

- 5 things you see
- 4 things you feel
- 3 things you hear
- 2 things you smell
- 1 thing you taste

Try the free app for meditation, sleep, and movement exercises.

[Headspace.com/mi](https://www.headspace.com/mi)

Resources for SUD/ODU

Help is out there. Here are places you can look.

University of Michigan – Addiction and Recovery Resources

Many resources for coping with substance use, online recovery options, virtual meetings, educational materials, and recovery support applications.

medicine.umich.edu/dept/psychiatry/programs/addiction-center/coronavirus-covid-19-addictionrecovery-resources

SAMHSA – Michigan Resources

Buprenorphine Locator

samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/practitioner-program-data/treatment-practitioner-locator

Opioid Treatment Locator

dpt2.samhsa.gov/treatment/

Michigan State Police - Angel Program

Safely turn in drug paraphenlia and get immediate support without fear of arrest.

michigan.gov/msp/0,4643,7-123-72297_34040_75044_97040---,00.html

Plan for Illness in your Household

You can help manage anxiety about COVID-19 by creating a plan in case you, or someone in your household, becomes ill. Use this tool to create your plan:

michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Prevent_and_Prepere_Final_687282_7.pdf

Find a Virtual Meeting

Eastern Michigan, Bay Area, & Central Michigan

Peer 360 Recovery

peer360recovery.org/meetings.html

Northern Lower Peninsula

You Pick Recovery - Northern Michigan

Substance Abuse Services (NMSAS)

Recovery Center

youpickrecovery.org/PR/docs/OnlineResources.pdf

West Michigan

Online Addiction Services

pinterest.org/addiction/online-addiction-services-michigan-iowa/

Southeast Michigan

1. hvai.org/aa_meetingsearch.html

2. namiwc.org/

3. washtenawalano.club/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/4112020-Zoom-Invitations.pdf

Statewide

Families Against Narcotics

familiesagainstnarcotics.org/



MI RESILIENCE

For more supportive resources:
Michigan.gov/StayWell