

COVID-19 AND FAITH AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

A cornerstone of the Clinton Foundation's mission is to improve public health, and we are committed to helping confront and adapt our programmatic work to address the new challenges we face.

The COVID-19 pandemic is forcing all of us to change the way we work, our social interactions, and our thinking about how best to safeguard everyone's health, particularly those who are most vulnerable in our families and in our communities.

We must all do our part to safely protect our health and the health of others, and we hope this information is helpful as we all navigate this unprecedented pandemic. Please note that as data and information continues to emerge you should visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov).

During times of distress and uncertainty, as with the COVID-19 pandemic, faith-based and community leaders continue to be valuable resources of comfort, support, and sources of information for their members and communities.

By reiterating guidance and recommendations by public health experts and local officials and sharing simple hygienic precautions and practices, faith leaders can help manage fear and stigma, restore faith, and calm their communities as we work to safeguard each other's health and look to recovering from this crisis.

10 THINGS FAITH LEADERS CAN DO

1. Create Facebook support and prayer groups to remain in touch and keep meaningful connections.
2. Keep community contact lists up-to-date and create 'calling trees' — or other practices to account for members who may be living alone, elderly, and vulnerable.
3. Share information about online or telephone support services for people with substance use disorders or people in crisis.
4. Stop any stigma related to COVID-19 by knowing the facts and by sharing them with others in your community.
5. Safely provide COVID-19 prevention supplies at your organization. Have supplies on hand such as soap, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, and disposable facemasks.
6. Conduct care visits by phone or virtually, especially if the individuals are in quarantine or isolation.
7. Consider partnering with other communities with existing technological capacity.
8. Plan ways to continue essential services — provide web and mobile-based communications and services, if possible. Increase the use of email, conference calls, video conferencing, and web-based seminars.
9. Think of alternatives for religious rituals and traditions (e.g., draining baptismal fonts, holy water stations, and vessels used for ritual washing).
10. Acknowledge this as a time of heightened stress and anxiety for the community and respond with practices appropriate to your organization's mission or faith tradition.

SOURCES:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html?CDC_AA_reVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fguidance-community-faith-organizations.html



COVID-19'S IMPACT ON PEOPLE WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

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As we think of how best to safeguard everyone's health amid the pandemic, we must also continue to support vulnerable groups such as people who are grappling with addiction and substance use disorders, to save lives and support people in recovery.

Those impacted by addiction are potentially at greater risk of being adversely affected by COVID-19:

Because it attacks the lungs, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 could be an especially serious threat to those who smoke tobacco or marijuana or who vape.

People with opioid use disorder (OUD) and methamphetamine use disorder may also be vulnerable due to those drugs' effects on respiratory and pulmonary health.

Individuals with a substance use disorder are more likely to experience homelessness or incarceration than those in the general population, and these circumstances pose unique challenges regarding transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.

COMMON QUESTIONS

What do you do if someone wants treatment for a substance use disorder?

Encourage your loved ones who are ready to seek treatment. Treatment providers are still open in every state.

To respond to the threat of COVID-19, many treatment providers are using telehealth which connects patients and their providers in real-time via computers and mobile devices for initial evaluations and evidence-based treatments including individual and group therapies. SAMHSA has also recommended that opioid treatment providers in every state provide patients with take-home medication so depending on your location, this option may be available to you.

STEPS FOR TREATMENT:

1

If you have insurance: Contact your insurer. Ask about your coverage and whether they have a network of preferred providers for you to use. If you don't have insurance: Each state has funding to provide treatment for people without insurance coverage. Use SAMHSA's National Helpline — 1-800-662-4357 or [FindTreatment.gov](#) for treatment referrals and information.

2

Review providers and determine if [five signs of quality treatment](#) are present.

3

Each facility has their own policies. Contact the treatment facility to ensure that they are open and accepting new patients.



How can I help support a loved ones' or my recovery while experiencing social isolation?

Staying safe and staying connected will help us support one another during this difficult time. To protect ones mental health and overcome anxiety during a crisis, the National Council for Behavioral Health recommends:

ESTABLISH A ROUTINE

Structure can help by providing boundaries and creating some sense of normalcy and predictability.

SET SMALL GOALS

And accomplish them! This will help you feel a sense of accomplishment.

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR GRIEF/ ANXIETY

We all are experiencing losses. It's OK not to feel OK.

USE TECHNOLOGY — stay connected to family, friends, and health care practitioners using online applications and platforms.

DON'T IGNORE YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH

Taking care of your body helps you take care of your mind. Also, it's OK to go outside and take a walk while maintaining distance from others.

LIMIT YOUR NEWS CONSUMPTION

There's always time to catch up on the news, so remember to take a break from the tidal wave of information.

Can I get naloxone?

Yes, you can get naloxone to keep on hand. At this time, pharmacies remain open as an essential business and in many states, no prescription is required to obtain naloxone at your local pharmacy. Checking with your state or local harm reduction organization is another option.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Online Social Support:

- [Daily Strength](#) — Online social network centered on support groups, where users provide one another with emotional support by discussing their struggles and successes with each other.
- [In the Rooms](#) — Free online recovery tool that offers 130 weekly online meetings for those recovering from addiction and related issues.
- [Support Group Central](#) — Offers virtual support groups on numerous mental health conditions - free or low-cost. Website also offered in Spanish.
- [Recovery 2.0](#) — Believes in a holistic approach to overcoming addiction. They offer support and training for every stage of recovery and honor all paths to recovery from all addictions. It's a place for healing, connection, personal development, and fun.

Remote 12-Step Meetings:

- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
- [Al-Anon](#)
- [Narcotics Anonymous](#)
- [Nar-anon Family Groups](#)

National Hotlines:

- **SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline** — 1-800-985-5990 provides 24/7 crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.
- **National Suicide Prevention Hotline** — 1-800-273-8255 provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.
- **Substance Use Treatment Helpline (SAMHSA)** — 1-800-662-4357 provides free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referrals and information (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.
- **United Way Helpline** — Dial 211 for 24/7 information about community resources, basic needs assistance, and other social services

SOURCES:

National Institute of Drug Abuse
<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/considerations-care-treatment-mental-substance-use-disorders-covid19.pdf>
<https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/about-us/news-media/coronavirus-disease-response>
<https://afsp.org/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-in-the-face-of-uncertainty/>
<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Finding-Quality-Treatment-for-Substance-Use-Disorders/PEP18-TREATMENT-LOC>
<https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/BH365/2020/03/23/coping-in-a-crisis-overcoming-anxiety/>

