
EMOTIONAL WELLNESS AND COVID-19

We're all likely experiencing some **emotional discomfort** (or worse!) – given the spread of COVID-19 and the disruption to our lives. **Grief** at losing out on experiences, **frustration** with the disruption in our daily routines, **anxiety** surrounding all of the uncertainty – all are normal reactions at this time. This situation is new and unpredictable! And the University's precautionary change to remote learning represents a major sea-change for us all. So how do we stay emotionally well during these times, when we're separated from friends and our college home?

- 1. Know that LSUS is committed to you.** You're the reason we exist! So we're working very hard to plan carefully and ensure your studies, growth, and campus connections continue.
- 2. Be careful of COVID-19 overload.** Limit the time you spend taking in COVID-19 news. It's coming at us from all directions and this can be downright overwhelming. Turn off/stop reading the news and social media. Maybe check in once a day.
- 3. Be careful of COVID-19 misinformation.** Rumors abound about what's open, what's not, what's closing, and so on. Check out rumors for yourself by going to reputable sources. Research state and local government sites for up to date information about closings. Go to the World Health Organization (<https://www.who.int/>) or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) for correct information about the virus. Also, check the LSUS COVID-19 information page (<http://www.lsus.edu/coronavirus-updates>), which is updated regularly.
- 4. Social connection is really good for us too!** Maintain social distance, of course, but stay in touch with friends. You might even try the old-fashioned art of letter writing!
- 5. Maintain a schedule, just as you would if going to school.** Meals, classes, study time, relaxation time. Having a schedule helps us contain emotions and feel a sense of control. Set your alarm, get up every morning, take a shower, get dressed, make your bed – try to maintain some semblance of your previously normal routine.

6. Our emotions reside in our bodies, so take good care of yours!

- Maintain a regular **sleep** schedule—try to go to sleep and wake up at roughly the same time.
- Work towards maintaining good **nutrition** and regular meals.
 - Limit alcohol intake.
 - Limit caffeine intake.
- Get some **exercise!**
- Spend some **time outside**, in **nature** especially.
- Practice **deep breathing, relaxation, yoga, meditation**. Not sure how to do these? YouTube!!
- Try taking up an activity that requires use of your **body and mind**, which can give you an emotional break: *knitting, art, woodworking, gardening, playing an instrument, etc.*

7. **Consider keeping a journal about what this experience is like for you.** But be sure to end your daily entry with 3 good things about the day, however small, to help keep your spirits up.

8. **Maintain perspective.** While this is a HUGE event for all of us, remind yourself of what's good in your life and what's important: health, family, friends, being able to continue towards your degree, the collective good and our common humanity.

9. **Spend time with your four-legged friends.** Some snuggle time with your pets can make a tough day a lot easier.

10. **Take the focus off of yourself: do something kind for someone else.** If you can't visit in person, call! Send a card! Send a supportive text! Bring food and supplies to the elderly.

11. **Look through the educational resources on the Counseling Services website and Facebook page.** There's a lot of good info there.

12. **Consider making use of one of the many mental health apps that are available for free and for pay.** You might find this link helpful in finding something that speaks to you.
<https://www.psych.com.net/25-best-mental-health-apps>

Below are some additional wellness-related apps:

	Android Market	Apple/iTunes
Music and Sounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calming Music to Tranquilize • Relax & Sleep • Relaxing Sounds • Relax Melodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relax Melodies • Relaxing Sounds of Nature Lite • Sleep Sounds Ambient Effects • Sleep Stream 2
Meditation, Breathing and Yoga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhist Meditation Trainer • Breathe 2 Relax • Qi Gong Meditation Relaxation • Tactical Breather • Yoga Workout Planner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calm • Headspace • Breathe2Relax • Insight Timer • Tactical Breather • Daily Yoga Free • Ten Percent Happier Meditation
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTSD Coach • Stress Tracker • T2 Mood Tracker • iQuarium Virtual Fish • Relaxation Portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmations Inspired by Nature • Wellscapes • PTSD Coach • T2 Mood Tracker • Sanvello • 3 Good Things Happiness Journal

13. If you feel you need more assistance in the form of counseling, read on.

- **DURING CAMPUS CLOSURE:**

- **For students remaining within the State of Louisiana:** We are continuing to provide services via teletherapy. Contact our office by email to schedule an appointment.
- **For out-of-state students:** We are happy to assist you in finding a local provider. So that we can be most helpful, we encourage you to investigate the following before contacting us to find a local therapist and/or psychiatrist . . .
 - Contact your insurance provider for a list of local providers who accept your insurance. Look at your insurance card or insurance-company website for information about how to do so.
 - Your insurance carrier may have a provision for teletherapy services. Contact your insurance company for information.
 - Your primary-care doctor's office may be able to provide referral suggestions to you.
 - *Psychology Today* will allow you to locate local therapists who accept your insurance. You can narrow choices based on your specific needs.
 - You may want to consider online mental health services such as [TalkSpace](#).

- **UPON CAMPUS RE-OPENING:**

- **For students in the local Shreveport region:** While we will be continuing to offer services via teletherapy, in-person services will be provided on a strictly limited basis. Students will not be allowed to enter the counseling office in person without contacting our office in advance. We will determine on a case-by-case basis whether students will be deemed most appropriate for in-person services, while being required to practice necessary safety precautions at all times. Contact our office by phone or email to schedule an appointment.
- **For students not in the Shreveport region but remaining within the State of Louisiana:** Even after campus reopens, we will continue to offer services via teletherapy. Contact our office by email to schedule an appointment.
- **For out-of-state students:** We are happy to schedule a **consultation appointment** to discuss your situation and needs, and also assist you in finding a local provider.

- **If you're experiencing a mental health crisis**

- Go to your local **hospital** emergency department OR dial **911**.
- Use any of the following live resources:
 - **Suicide Prevention Lifeline** by dialing **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**
 - **National Crisis Text Line** by texting **"TALK"** to **741741**
 - **COVID-19 Crisis Counseling Hotline** by texting **"REACHOUT"** to **741741**
 - **Keep Calm During COVID-19 Phone Line** by dialing **1-866-310-7977**

- **If you need further assistance, we are happy to consult with you.** Please email our office to schedule a time for a brief "meeting." We will be using the ZOOM platform, which can be accessed via your computer, tablet, or smartphone. All LSUS students have a free Zoom account, and the Zoom app can be downloaded to a smartphone. For now, we are maintaining regular business hours: 8:30-5, M-F.

Finally, know that we, like you, are monitoring the situation and will adapt to changing circumstances.

Stay well, safe, and healthy!

~ *Counseling Services*