

Practices which support our mental and physical health are important at any time, but most especially when exposure to stress is high - such as in the middle of a pandemic. Times of immense and sudden change can cause new mental health symptoms to develop, and existing ones to worsen. And of course, this is exactly at the same time that a lot of wellness practices become harder to maintain. Along with getting creative about practicing healthy habits (check out these resources from SAMHSA: <https://tinyurl.com/trrc182>), it's also important to know about ways to access mental health care services even, and especially, while social distancing remains necessary:

Teletherapy and Cost Coverage

- Many mental health providers, including those for children and teens, are expanding their services to offer **teletherapy** over secure video conferencing platforms, allowing you to meet with any therapist in the state, from wherever you are, through your laptop, tablet or phone.
- Many insurance companies are offering expanded coverage and waived fees for teletherapy during the outbreak. Check with your insurance company to confirm benefits and providers. <https://www.ahip.org/health-insurance-providers-respond-to-coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Medicaid and Medicare have expanded their coverage to include teletherapy during the outbreak. Find a teletherapist who accepts Medicaid or Medicare, and ask them about what is covered: <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/find-a-doctor/mental-health-providers> or <https://www.medicare.gov/physiciancompare/>
- If you have lost your health coverage during this outbreak, you may qualify for a special enrollment period through the healthcare marketplace. For more information, visit <https://www.healthcare.gov/blog/coronavirus-marketplace-coverage/>
- Or call the 24/7 Access Line to your LME (<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/providers/lme-mco-directory>) for confidential referrals to free or sliding scale teletherapy.
- Companies like Better Help (www.betterhelp.com/) and Talkspace (www.talkspace.com) specialize in teletherapy at discounted rates. Talkspace Teen offers teletherapy to kids 13+.

24/7 Free and Crisis Support

- For those not wanting to seek therapy, or wanting immediate support, Optum is offering a free 24 hour Emotional Support Line, open to everyone, at 1-866-342-6892.
- Parents in need of talk support can call the National Parent Helpline at 1-855-427-2736
- For mental health crisis concerns, see here for resources including the Mobile Crisis Unit: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/mental-health-substance-abuse/crisis-services>.
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, thehotline.org or text LOVEIS to 22522
- ChildHelp National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)