

# NYC Early Childhood Mental Health **TTAC** Training and Technical Assistance Center

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN



TTAC is funded by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene through [ThriveNYC](#)

## NYC Early Childhood Mental Health Network Self-Care Resources for Child Serving Professionals

While we have switched to tele-health and other remote means of work, most of us are still on the front lines providing psychotherapeutic and other supports to children and families whose needs and stressors have only increased during the health crisis posed by the coronavirus. We are doing this work under extremely difficult circumstances - many of us with children at home full-time and with the added responsibility for overseeing their schooling - while we are also contending with the need to continuously solve problems, even in order to secure basic resources like food. When we consider that there is also the overarching fear for our own health and that of our loved ones, it is clear that there is good justification for our own markedly increased levels of stress.

Self-care during times of crisis is extremely important, certainly for ourselves, but just as much in order to be able to help and support our clients on an on-going basis. Managing your own level of stress will have the dual benefit of sustaining your own well-being as well as making you more effective in your work. Each of us is different, our preferences and possibilities quite varied, so there is no prescription for self-care that will be effective for everyone. Yet there are some things that are universally applicable.

TTAC is providing this guide to self-care to support your efforts, and to encourage you to attend to, and even prioritize, the suggestions and resources shared below.

- Experts are most aligned in suggesting that the single most important and effective means of self-care is to maintain social connections. In this regard, many have challenged the mandate for “social distancing” and have advocated for guidance to promote “physical distancing” instead. Social bonds and emotional closeness are, for most, our greatest form of sustenance. Fortunately, technology permits us to achieve this even when physical proximity is discouraged. Call your friends and loved ones often; send notes and emails, use Facetime, Skype and Zoom to see, converse, and share with your friends and family.
- Be patient with, and have reasonable expectations for, yourself. We are all adjusting to a very different reality and a total disruption of our usual, day-to-day lives. We have more things to attend to, more things to figure out, and more realistic worries. You may not have the same degree of concentration as you previously did, or the same capacity or opportunity to focus on things for prolonged periods of time. This will all go back to normal after the crisis ebbs, but in the meantime, allow yourself to be slightly less productive, at least some of the time, without being hard on yourself for this.
- Emotional health and well-being rests on a foundation of physical health. It is important to get sufficient sleep, to eat healthy and nutritious food, stay hydrated and avoid substances like alcohol and drugs that lower immunity. Try to adapt your exercise routine to methods available to you in your home or immediate surroundings.
- Maintain routines as much as possible, or establish new routines. This will help you feel regulated, accomplish what you aim to do, and keep things normalized to the extent possible. Maintaining routines for the children in your care, or establishing new routines for them, is important too, as this supports children’s growing capacities for self-regulation and assists in managing their anxieties. Despite the importance of this, it is also important to maintain a sense of flexibility. There will be many times that things don’t, or can’t, occur as planned. The capacity to be flexible when needed will help reduce stress.

- Manage negative thoughts by generating coping statements or healthy self-talk (e.g. “this crisis will end”; “I’ve overcome hard circumstances before”); remind yourself of your own strengths and triumphs, and keep yourself focused on the transience of this situation. Learn how to use deep breathing as a calming technique. Also, consider the practice of gratitude, which many have found to improve mood and a sense of well-being in difficult times
- Balance your exposure to distressing news reports with activities that are both diverting and contribute to emotional wellness. There is substantial scientific evidence of the positive impact on well-being of exposure to nature (and sunlight), mindfulness, and physical exercise, as well as the uplifting nature of music.

Building coping capacity and resilience is another dimension of self-care. Coping is effortful, meaning we work at it. We might do that by consciously reframing a stressful experience by identifying what was learned; what opportunities might have arisen out of it. We might consciously use strategic denial in which we decide to ignore some dimension of discomfort for example to get the task done. We might afford ourselves some period of time to entertain a worry but then visualize-in-mind putting that worry in a box, closing the lid and carrying on.

Another strategy to build stress-endurance is to give ourselves stress inoculations. Imagine the stress situation and make it more stressful than the situation might be in reality and visualize yourself coping. When you tackle the task or situation in reality it may be perceived as less challenging than anticipated. Also give yourself stress inoculations periodically. When you have gotten through a stressful passage give yourself credit; remind yourself you have inner resources and if you coped with this situation you possess the capacity and model to cope with other stress events.

**TTAC offers the following additional resources:**

**Archived TTAC Webinar:**

**Supporting Families and Caregivers of Infants and Young Children Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic**

TTAC hosted a webinar titled **Supporting Families and Caregivers of Infants and Young Children Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic** presented by Gerard Costa, Ph.D. & Joy D. Osofsky, Ph.D.

In this webinar, Drs. Joy Osofsky and Gerard Costa addressed the impact of the changes in our world and personal lives brought about by COVID-19. Special attention was given to the ways in which infants, toddlers and preschoolers are affected when their usual routines are disrupted and their ability to manage stress and stay regulated are compromised. These changes were described through developmental and relationship-based perspectives, highlighting the critical importance of establishing new routines to support co-regulating, attuned, and responsive relationships.

Insights from the brain sciences were described to better understand the ways in which infants, children and adults may react around the fearful climate of COVID-19. Strategies for speaking with, supporting, and playing with infants and young children were presented. Importantly, the need for self-care of the adults in the lives of the children was addressed.

**[Presentation Slides](#)**

**<https://bit.ly/TTAC-COVID19-Slides>**

**[Webinar Webpage](#)**

<https://bit.ly/TTAC-COVID19-Site>

**Webinar Recording**

<https://bit.ly/TTAC-COVID19-VID>

## American Psychological Association

### Self-Care Resources for Healthcare Providers During COVID-19

Health-care providers and other hospital and clinic staff are on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many providers are balancing competing demands, caring for our patients, our families and ourselves. Here are concrete strategies to help manage stress during this challenging time.

Highlights include:

- Anxious or worried?
- Pace yourself
- Breathe
- Maintain good health habits
- Exercise, exercise, exercise
- Connect, connect and connect again
- Take breaks at work and at home
- Promote teamwork
- Maintain structure at home
- Flexibility is essential

**[Click Here to Visit the American Psychological Association COVID-19 Resource Webpage](#)**

<https://bit.ly/TTAC-APA>

## Center for Disease Control: Coping with an Emergency or Traumatic Event

Taking care of your emotional health during an emergency will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family. Self-care during an emergency will help your long-term healing.

Highlights include:

- Take care of your body
- Connect with others

- Take breaks
- Stay informed
- Avoid too much exposure to news
- Seek help when needed

**[Click Here to View the CDC's Resource Webpage](#)**

<https://bit.ly/TTAC-CDC>

**[Haz Clic Aqui para Ver este Recurso en Español](#)**

<https://bit.ly/TTAC-CDC-ESP>

### Headspace for Health Care Professionals

Headspace, an online application specializing in meditation, is offering all US healthcare professionals who work in public health settings free access to Headspace Plus through 2020. If you are a healthcare professional, you can redeem your subscription using your National Provider Identifier (NPI) and email address.

Here's how you can access Headspace Plus:

- Select the state where your NPI is registered from the dropdown menu below. This may not necessarily be where you currently live.
- Enter your last name as it appears in the NPI registry. This may be the name you used before getting married.
- Enter your individual NPI. This should be your personal ID, not from a hospital or healthcare system.

**[Click Here to Learn More About Headspace](#)**

<https://bit.ly/TTAC-Headspace>

### Oprah & Deepak

#### 21-day Meditation Experience

In the 21-Day Meditation Experience, Oprah and Deepak guide you on a free online journey to enjoy the life-changing benefits of meditation in an easy and inspiring way.

Highlights include:

- Daily audio meditations
- Motivational messages
- Thought-provoking journal questions to anchor the day's teachings
- Articles, videos, and tips to help create a thriving meditation practice

**[Click Here to Learn More About the 21-day Meditation Experience](#)**

<https://bit.ly/TTAC-21days>

### Managing Anxiety related to COVID-19

Webinar presented by Dr. Dana Crawford and Dr. Miguelina German, Montefiore

The 22- minute webinar is aimed toward Health Care Professionals who have to go to work during COVID-19. It gives you skills to calm down right now, as well as ways to maintain optimal health.

**[Click Here to View the Webinar](#)**

<https://bit.ly/TTAC-Coping>

### National Child Traumatic Stress Network Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Fact Sheet for Child Serving Professionals

This fact sheet provides a concise overview of secondary traumatic stress and its potential impact on child-serving professionals. It also outlines options for assessment, prevention, and interventions relevant to secondary stress, and describe the elements necessary for transforming child-serving organizations and agencies into systems that also support worker resiliency.

**[Click Here to View the Fact Sheet](#)**

<https://bit.ly/TTAC-Trauma-Info>

### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health: Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During an Infectious Disease Outbreak (Spanish Version)

**Cómo cuidar de su salud conductual: Consejos para lidiar con medidas de precaución durante un brote de una enfermedad contagiosa: distanciamiento social, cuarentena y aislamiento**

Esta hoja de consejos explica algunas de las medidas de precaución que pueden tomar las autoridades frente a un brote de una enfermedad contagiosa o infecciosa, como el ébola. Estas medidas pueden incluir el distanciamiento social, la cuarentena y el aislamiento. Habla sobre los sentimientos que se pueden tener cuando es necesario enfrentar estas medidas, y sugiera maneras sobre cómo lidiar con la situación y cuidar de su salud mental y la de su familia.

**[Haz Clic Aquí para Ver Esta Hoja de Consejos](#)**

<https://bit.ly/TTAC-Cuidar-Salud>

Visit our website at [ttacny.org](http://ttacny.org)

NYC Early Childhood Mental Health

Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC)

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