

## **TOOLBOX TALK #52**

### **STRESS AND COPING WITH COVID 19**

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in. Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs

Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their stress can also make your community stronger. Things you can do to support yourself include:

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotion like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call:

- 911
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 (TTY 1-800-846-8517)