



*ESRD Networks 7, 13, 15, 17*

# Combating the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Blues and Q&A Session With Patients

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*It is during our darkest moments that we must  
focus to see the light.*

—Aristotle Onassis

# Q&A Session

*The Dialysis Patient Experience During COVID-19*

# COVID-19 Blues

- You may be feeling some of the following:
  - Uncertainty
  - Grief
  - Fear
  - Anxiety
  - Sadness



# What Steps Can We Take to Practice Self-Care of Our Bodies?

- Be mindful of your physical health.
  - Go to treatments as scheduled.
  - Get enough sleep.
  - Follow your renal diet and fluid instructions.
  - Go for a walk or get some sort of exercise.
  - Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.
  - Recharge by taking time for yourself.



# Self-Care of Our Minds

- Reduce stress triggers by limiting screen time.
  - Turn off/Snooze electronic devices 30 minutes before bedtime.
  - Take a social media break.
  - Limit exposure to news media.
- Keep a routine.
  - Maintain a routine to help your mental health by having consistent mealtimes, exercise schedules, treatment times, etc.
  - Create this structure to help bring pattern and predictability to each day that could otherwise feel isolating.



# Self-Care of Our Minds (cont.)

- Stay busy by doing something productive each day.
  - Set priorities for yourself whether it is working to clean your house each day, finding a new hobby you can do at home, or tackling a project that has been on your list for months.





# Self-Care by Connecting

- Support family/friends by calling them on the phone, using Facetime, sending a handwritten card, and sending them a text to let them know you are just checking in.
- Spread kindness to others. Look around to see who may benefit from your help.
  - Consider dropping off a magazine and a drink on a friend's porch.
  - Grab a few extra groceries to give to your elderly neighbor.



# How Can We Show Calmness?

- Pause and ask yourself:
  - “What things are making me feel anxious?”
  - “How can I reset myself?”
  - “What can I do right now that will reduce my anxiety?”



# Exercising Self-Compassion

- Give yourself grace. Know that everyone makes mistakes.
- Recognize that some days will be better than others.
- Do not carry the burden of your stress alone.
- Reach out and connect with loved ones.



# Mental Health Resources

- If you continue to feel helpless, sad, angry, afraid, anxious, etc., talk to your clinic social worker.
  - Reach out to your facility social worker about resources.
  - Call your primary care provider or mental health professional for appointment options to talk about your anxiety/depression and get advice/guidance. Some may provide the option of phone, video, or online appointments.
  - Use this children's story book that is available online or can be printed: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/09-04-2020-children-s-story-book-released-to-help-children-and-young-people-cope-with-covid-19>.

# Mental Health Resources (cont.)

- Use the *Dialysis Patient Depression Toolkit* from the National Forum of End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Networks:
  - <https://esrdnetworks.org/toolkits/patient-toolkits/new-toolkit-dialysis-patient-depression-toolkit/dialysis-patient-depression-toolkit-english/dialysis-patient-depression-toolkit-english-complete-toolkit-38-pages/view>.
- Contact organizations via National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) at 800.950.6264.
- If you are feeling suicidal or thinking of hurting yourself, **seek help.**
  - Contact your primary care provider or a mental health professional.
  - Call a suicide hotline, such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1.800.273.TALK (1.800.273.8255).



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# Thank you!

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