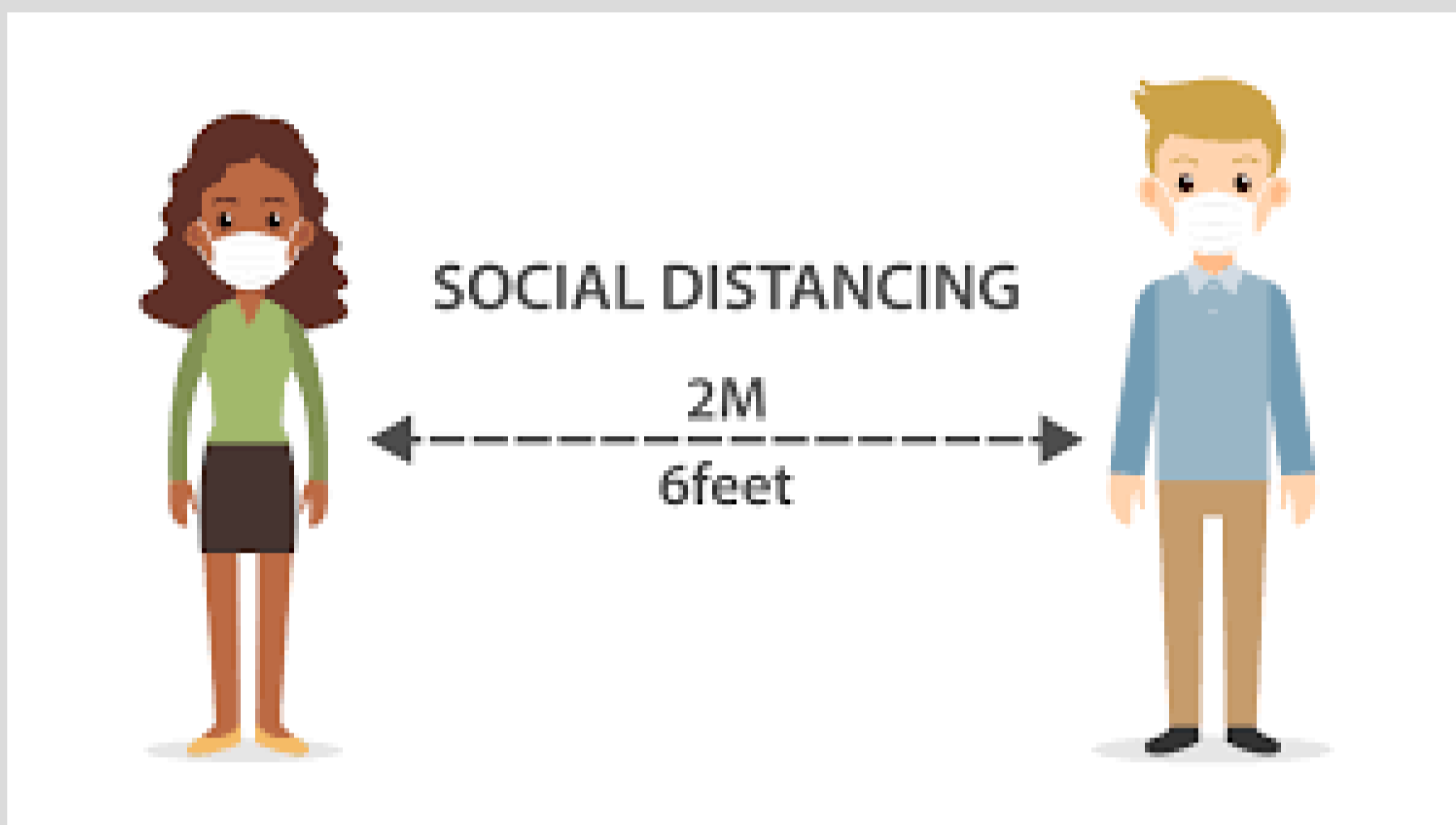




Navigating the Mental Health Impacts, Challenges, and Coping Strategies during COVID-19



Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us have been challenged in many ways. This infographic lists common challenges and management strategies to aid in navigating the many changes during this period.

Grief Cycle During the COVID-19 Pandemic



The grief cycle is a framework that can be used to understand the emotions people experience and the stages they move through as a result of the pandemic. The process is not linear; the pace at which an individual may move through each stage will vary.^{1,2}

Denial

This virus won't affect us.



Anger

You're making me stay home and taking away my activities.



Bargaining

Okay, if I social distance for two weeks everything will be better, right?



Sadness

I don't know when this will end.



Acceptance

This is happening; I have to figure out how to proceed.



Psychological Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic



The psychosocial responses caused by COVID-19 vary. Vast behavioral changes imposed by public health and national officials and numerous uncertainties can cause profound psychological outcomes and disturbances among people navigating a global crisis.^{3,4}

Common Psychological Reactions

- Anxiety & worry
- Somatization
- Frustration
- Anger
- Irritability
- Helplessness
- Powerlessness
- Guilt surrounding work
- Sadness
- Anhedonia
- PTSD-like symptoms
- Panic
- Moderate to severe depression
- Significant substance misuse
- Severe insomnia/hypersomnia
- Hopelessness
- Significant withdrawal
- Suicidality
- Disruptions of appetite
- Disruptions of sleep

Common Fears During COVID-19

- Falling ill and dying
- Infecting loved ones
- Being separated from loved ones
- Losing livelihood or economic stability
- Social exclusion and isolation
- Death of loved ones

Common Challenges of Social Distancing

- Stressors associated with negative psychological effects
- Longer quarantine duration
- Infection fears
- Frustration
- Boredom
- Inadequate supplies and information
- Financial loss
- Stigma

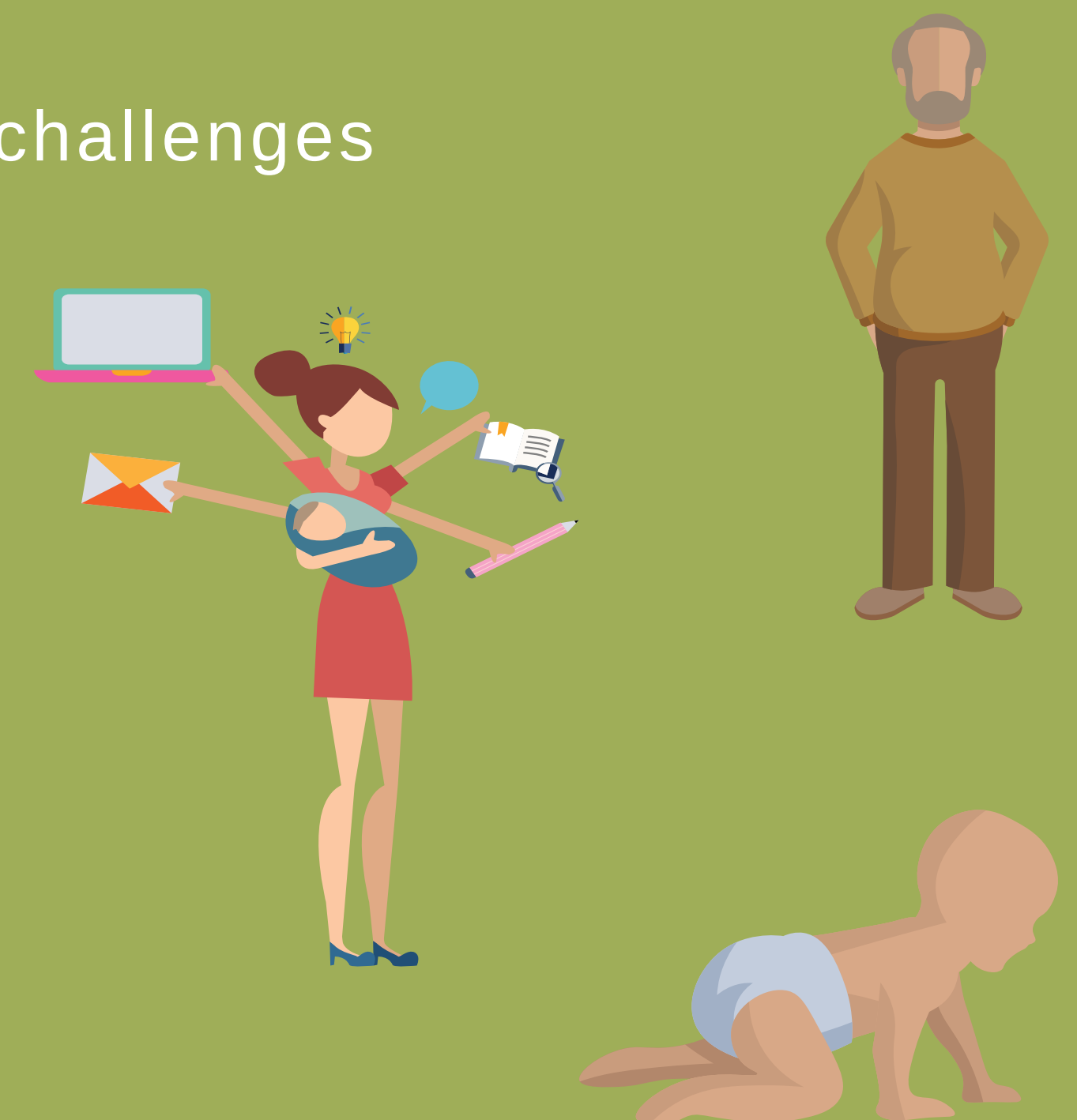


Interpersonal Impact of COVID-19

Due to social distancing and self-isolation measures during the pandemic, navigating relationships may be challenging.^{3,4} Common concerns and challenges impacting relationship dynamics with family, friends, colleagues, and loved ones are discussed.

Common Interpersonal Relationship Concerns

- Inability to spending quality time, visit or caretake if they get sick
- Worrying about their level of social isolation, especially if loved ones are not tech-savvy
- Feeling very upset, sad, and angry about the inability to proceed with typical death rituals
- Experiencing considerable conflict and communication challenges
- Struggling with role sharing with partners
- Being alone without appropriate childcare or support
- Being aware of increases in child abuse
- Being aware of increases in intimate partner violence
- Juggling work and childcare
- Ensuring children's homework is complete



Common Interpersonal Relationship Concerns of Healthcare Providers

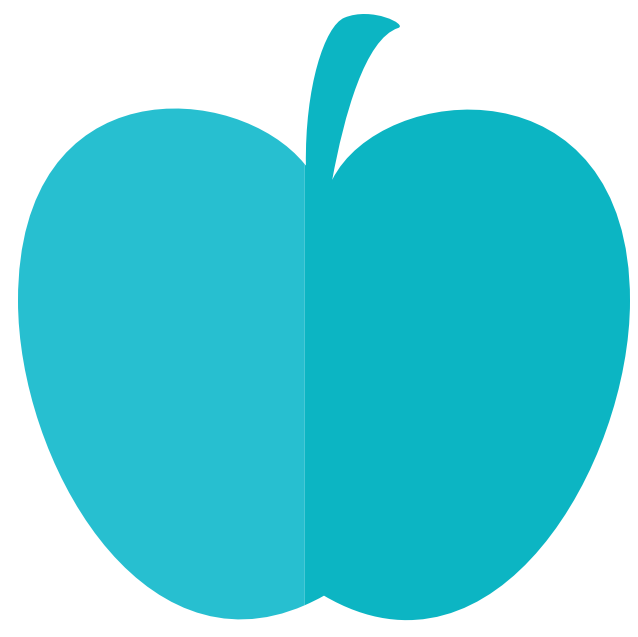
- Reduced capacity to use social support due to intense work demands and not feeling understood
- Increased interpersonal conflicts in the workplace
- Concerns about infecting loved ones
- Fear of colleagues falling ill
- Feeling unsupported due to a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Extensive work hours
- Disagreements with family about working in a hospital



Coping Strategies During COVID-19



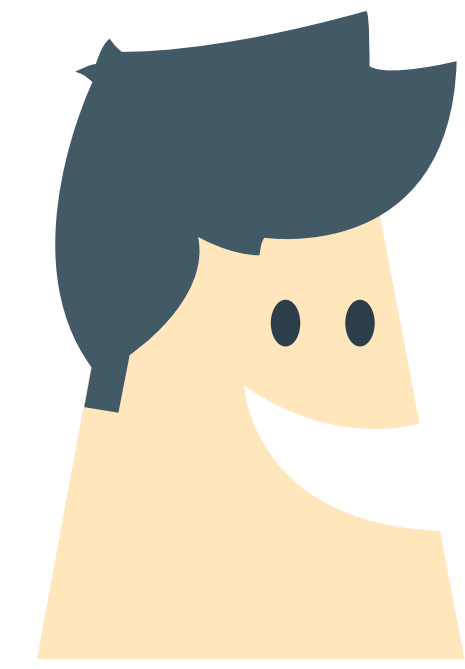
Staying healthy during the pandemic requires change to our daily lives. Here are a few ways to develop and maintain new wellness routines.⁴



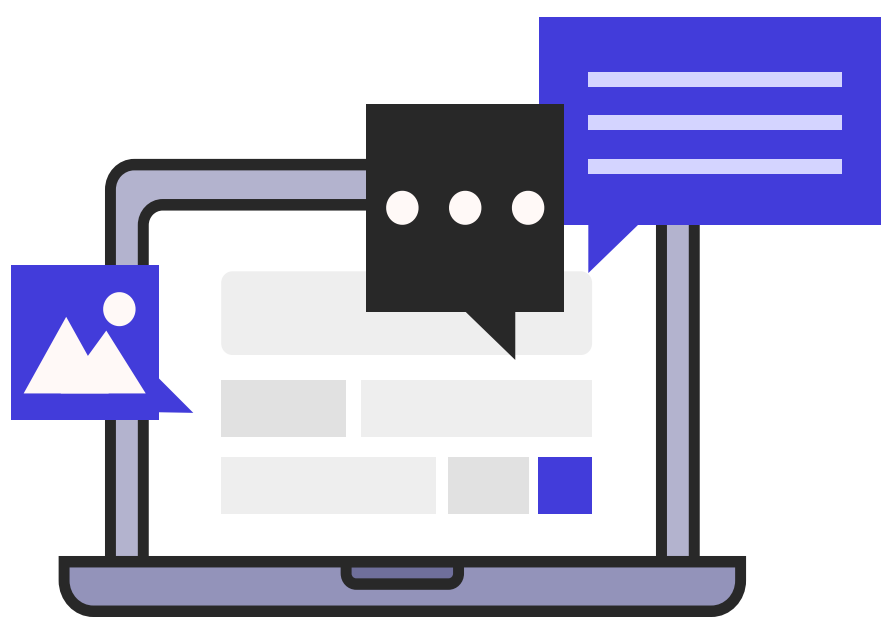
Use technology to interact with others, including starting new social traditions (i.e., Zoom/FaceTime)



Schedule plans with family members to manage competing demands



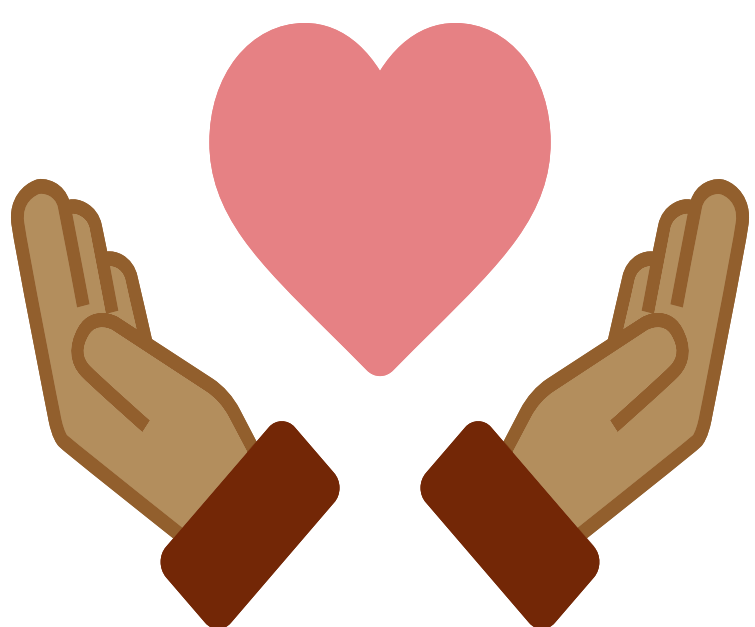
Advocate for yourself and express your needs with friends, family, and co-workers



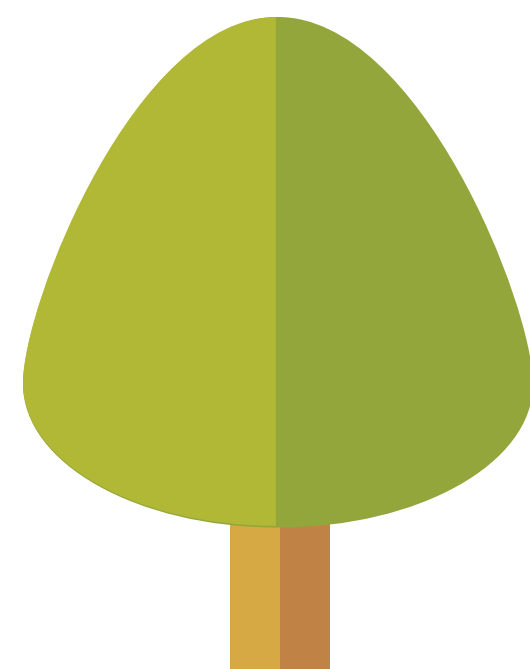
Take care of yourself by meeting basic needs around sleep, nutrition, hygiene, and exercise



Recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of family, friends, and co-workers



Prioritize your relationships; stay connected with those you find compassionate and trustworthy



Connect with nature or your spirituality



Give yourself time and space to feel your emotions and grieve losses experienced during the pandemic

Sources

1. Berinato, S. (2020). That discomfort you're feeling is grief. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief>. Chicago
2. Kessler, D. (2019). Finding meaning: The sixth stage of grief. *New York, NY: Scribner*.
3. Pfefferbaum, B., & North, C. S. (2020). Mental health and the Covid-19 pandemic. *New England Journal of Medicine*. Chicago
4. Southeast Mental Health Technology Transfer Center. (2020, April 6). *COVID-19: Mental Health Challenges & Resilience*. <https://southeastmhttc.org/covid-19-mental-health-challenges-and-resilience/>