

## Provider Notice

**To:** PerformCare Members, Families, School Personnel, and Network of Providers  
**From:** PerformCare, Pennsylvania  
**Date:** April 28, 2022  
**Subject:** Mental Health and COVID-19

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Teachers and students may be feeling an increase in stress, uncertainty, and other unsettling emotions due to the prolonged nature of the Pandemic. As part of a series on this topic, common psychological reactions that impact all age groups are reviewed, as well as suggestions for better managing this distress.

### **Common psychological reactions toward the COVID-19 pandemic (CDC, 2022)**

- Feelings of feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration.
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels.
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions.
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares.
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- New or increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

If you, your child, or student experiences any of these indicators for several days in a row, and are unable to carry out normal responsibilities, please let your treatment provider know. If you are not receiving treatment, please consider talking to a professional therapist. To find providers you can call PerformCare (or visit our website at <https://pa.performcare.org/>).

## **Self-Care and Coping Strategies:**

- Take care of your body– Try to eat healthy well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- Connect with others– Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend, professional, or family member.
- Maintain healthy relationships, and build a strong support system.
- Take breaks– Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Try taking in deep breaths, and teaching your child/student this. Try to do activities the class usually enjoy.
- Stay informed– When you feel that you are missing information, you may become more stressed or nervous. Watch, listen to, or read the news for updates from officials. Be aware that there may be rumors during a crisis, especially on social media. Always check your sources and turn to reliable sources of information like your local government authorities.
- Avoid too much exposure to news– Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeatedly. Try to do enjoyable activities and return to normal life as much as possible. Explain to children or students in developmentally appropriate ways.
- Seek help when needed– If distress impacts activities of your daily life for several days or weeks, or you notice a change in mood or behavior in a student, please consider talking to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor. To find providers you can call PerformCare (or visit our website at <https://pa.performcare.org/>).

*Excerpted from: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare>*