

# BenefitFacts

## Coping with Emotions in a Crisis

**COVID-19 has changed the way people interact, and the emotional scars it can leave behind will be a challenge long after the crisis is over.**

Pandemics cause a lot of stress on a population. The level of fear, the change in how you conduct your life, and, should you contract the disease, the physical impact, all play heavily on a person's mental well-being.

COVID-19 is an ever-present threat to our communities. People tend to deal with such trauma by banding together and providing emotional support to each other. An unfortunate fact about the virus is its high rate of infection, and the first line of defense for sick or at-risk groups is isolation. When we lose that feeling of connectedness, we lose our number-one method of dealing with trauma.

People who contract the disease have the obvious challenge of dealing with the physiological impact along with the isolation and fear. But it also impacts family, friends and co-workers who must self-quarantine, and now feel uncertainty about their own health. It leads to a lot of stress on a person's psychological well-being and can ultimately affect their work and relationships.

In these difficult times, and even beyond the end of the crisis, **we, as employers, coworkers, family members and friends, need to be aware of any signs of depression or anxiety in the people we care about.**

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a powerful tool for employees who may be experiencing these feelings. Through their EAP, employees can take advantage of access to professional counsellors who provide confidential support to help them understand and process some of these emotions.

No one is immune to the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's important to encourage the people we care about (and ourselves!) to engage in positive steps to protecting mental health and to know they're not alone.

