COPING WITH STRESS, ANXIETY, AND SUBSTANCE USE DURING COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has created disruptions in our lives that can cause feelings of stress and anxiety. These feelings are normal.

If you’re feeling stressed or anxious, you may be experiencing:

- Fear or constant worry
- Anger or being easily irritated
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Struggling with decisions
- Consuming alcohol, cannabis, or other substances more than usual

When you use alcohol, cannabis, or other substances to cope or temporarily relieve stress and anxiety, it may make those feelings worse and increase the risk of developing a substance use disorder.

Try Square Breathing

This simple exercise can help calm your nervous system and alleviate feelings of anxiety when you’re getting overwhelmed.

Breathe IN 1...2...3...4

HOLD 1...2...3...4

Breathe OUT 1...2...3...4

What you can do to cope

- Stay active and keep yourself busy with activities you enjoy.
- Stay connected with friends and family while still practicing social distancing.
- Find balance by staying informed, but know when to take a break from COVID-19 news and topics.
- Be kind to yourself, this is a difficult time, and you’re doing your best to manage a challenging situation.
- Take care of your body by eating, sleeping well, exercising, and meditating.
- Reach out for help! Talk to a family member, friend, or seek professional support if needed.

If you use substances

1. Monitor your use: pay attention to its frequency and context.
2. Avoid stockpiling alcohol, cannabis, and other substances.
3. Follow the Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines (Canada)
4. Follow the Low Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines (Canada)
5. If you feel your use is becoming a problem, call Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (800) 686-0101 | www.smchealth.org/bhrs/aod/recovery

For opioid use, ask about medication assisted treatment at (650) 573-2735 | www.smchealth.org/imat

For more information, visit: www.smchealth.org/bhrsservices

SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & RECOVERY SERVICES

Courtesy of Mental Health Commission of Canada and Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.