

***Uniting to Make a Difference During COVID-19***  
***How to Be a Good Neighbor and Community Member During This Time***

As we all face growing concerns about COVID-19, our mission and purpose here at United Way remains the same. It is as important as ever that we center our humanity and stay united to minimize the spread of the disease and to keep our family, friends and neighbors safe. Use this list as a tool to practice ways to be a compassionate neighbor and do your part to help yourself and community stay calm, educated, and prepared for what is to come.

- ***Be Aware of the Symptoms/Take Care of Yourself & Help Others***
  - Watch for symptoms in yourself and family. Symptoms may show up 2-14 days after exposure and include: [Fever, cough, shortness of breath](#)
  - [The CDC Recommends](#) washing your hands often for at least 20 seconds especially after being in a public place or blowing your nose/sneezing, use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol when soap and water isn't available and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands. Also, avoid close contact with people who are sick and put distance between yourself and others to stop the spread of COVID-19 in your community.
  - To help protect your neighbors stay home if you're sick, cover your cough and sneezes, **wear a facemask only if you are sick**, practice cleaning and disinfecting community spaces that are used often.
- ***When Shopping/Getting Supplies Allow for Extra Time and Patience***
  - Be aware that everyone will react and process the news of COVID-19 differently. When you must go in public to grocery shop, get gas or acquire supplies please remember that our neighbors and community members may be on edge or afraid. Respond with compassion and kindness and allow yourself extra time for lines at the stores. Only purchase what you need and try to avoid panic-purchasing.
- ***Only Purchase What You Need and Be Aware of Your Neighbors Needs***
  - It is important that as you plan to prepare yourself and your family to stay protected and safe during COVID-19 that you're also only buying what you need. Please keep in mind that many people in our community with chronic illness or disabilities preparing for COVID-19 can be very difficult due to mobility, health, transportation and additional barriers. When purchasing supplies limit your items to the things you need so there is plenty to go around for everyone including neighbors who may be at more risk for contracting COVID-19.
  - As the situation develops remember that not every member of our community has access to the basics they need to stay safe. The United Way for Southeastern Michigan is monitoring developments of this global pandemic - particularly for families in vulnerable communities. For these families, one illness or missed paycheck can be disastrous. Consider donating or taking part in virtual volunteer opportunities that address the needs of our community members who may not have access to basics like hand sanitizer, hand washing, and nutritious foods.
- ***Support a Neighbor/Family Member/Friend Who is At a Higher Risk***

- [Older adults and people](#) with serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes and lung disease are at a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. Help your neighbors and community members that fall under this category by offering to pick up new cleaning supplies, groceries, and medicine so they do not have to go in crowded public spaces. Be sure to only do this if you can acquire new and unopened items and can give them to your neighbor from a safe distance. You could also take an inventory of your neighbors in need of this type of assistance and create a plan to get other neighbors involved and ready to help.
- **Combat Stigma and Help Your Community Be Resilient**
  - [According to the CDC public health emergencies like COVI-19 are not only stressful for people and communities but uncertainty and fear around the outbreak can lead to social stigma.](#) “Social stigma toward people, places, or things. For example, stigma and discrimination can occur when people associate a disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality, even though not everyone in that population or from that region is specifically at risk for the disease. Stigma can also occur after a person has been released from COVID-19 quarantine even though they are not considered a risk for spreading the virus to others.”
  - You can make a difference by knowing the facts and sharing them
    - [Check out this list of facts from the CDC](#)
      1. Diseases affect anyone regardless of race and ethnicity
      2. The immediate risk of becoming seriously ill is still low for most people
      3. When someone is released from quarantine or isolation, they do not pose any threat of infection to others
      4. Do your part by washing your hands for 20 seconds, avoid touching your face, stay home when sick, cover your cough or sneeze with tissue and throw that tissue away
      5. Know the signs and symptoms
        - a. Fever
        - b. Cough
        - c. Shortness of Breath
      6. Contact medical help if you have any symptoms, have traveled to an affected area, or have been in contact with someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19
- **Practice Social Distance but Stay Connected to Family/Friends/Loved Ones**
  - Just as social stigma can affect mental health so can isolation from our normal lives and typical day to day activities. Take time to reach out to a neighbor through a phone call, video-chat or text message to check in on one another. If you normally meet up with a friend or group weekly – reschedule for a virtual meeting. Keeping an adjusted routine that feels like your regular one will help you and your community feel connected and secure.
  - If you see a neighbor when walking in or out of your home, make a conscious effort to wave or say hello. This may seem simple but continuing to show kindness and care from a distance goes a long way.

- [The CDC recommends that in order to support ourselves and others we should:](#)
  - Avoid over-exposure to media coverage of COVID-19
    - It is ok to take breaks and set limits on the amount of time per day that you read articles or watch the news. Encourage your neighbors and friends to do the same.
  - Take care of your body and mind. Practice deep breaths, stretching and try to eat well-balanced meals. Work on getting plenty of sleep and developing a workout routine you can do at home if needed.
  - Stay connected with others and share your concerns and feelings with neighbors, friends and family.
  - Make time to do activities you enjoy. Perhaps engage your friends and neighbors by starting up a virtual book club, weekly call after watching a certain movie/tv show or connect over virtual games online.
- [Supporting Children During COVID-19](#)
  - Children will all respond to stress and the news of COVID-19 in different ways. Wither you have children or not you can support children by staying calm and role modeling good hygiene practices, compassion to others, and taking care of yourself mentally, physically and spiritually.