

The background of the image is a dark red color with a white line-art map of a city grid. The grid consists of numerous rectangular blocks of varying sizes, some of which are more densely packed than others. The lines are thin and white, creating a high-contrast pattern against the red background.

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Addressing Stress and Mental Health

Kimberlyn Leary



What should mayors understand about the mental health of their communities during this crisis?

What can mayors do to support the mental health of their communities?

How can mayors manage their own stress and that of their teams?

When Should You Worry About Stress and Anxiety?

- Under ordinary conditions, they serve as signals.
- Stress can become traumatic when people face events that are negative, uncontrollable, ambiguous, unpredictable and require continuous adaptation.





**What are you worried about
regarding mental health in your city?**

The Early Data Signals of COVID-19

from Digital Mental Health

TalkSpace: Volume is up ~25% since the middle of February.

BetterHelp: Number of new users on its service has spiked; users about stress and anxiety has doubled compared to last year.

Crisis Text Line: Message volume has risen by 116 percent, with callers using words like “scared,’ ‘terrified,’ ‘overwhelmed,’ ‘panicking,’ and ‘paranoid.’”

COVID-19 and Parental Stress

- Half of parents (50%) surveyed are worried they can't afford to pay bills or that money will run out.
- A majority of parents (61%) shouted, yelled or screamed at their children at least once in the past 2 weeks.
- About 1 in 5 (20%) spanked or slapped their child at least once in the past 2 weeks.
- Parents reported they have yelled or screamed at their children more often (19%) or increased discipline (15%) since the Coronavirus pandemic.



**STRESS AND PARENTING
DURING THE CORONAVIRUS
PANDEMIC**

Shawna J. Lee & Kaitlin P. Ward

Domestic Violence Is On The Rise



Some cities see jumps in domestic violence during the pandemic

By Casey Tolan, CNN

🕒 Updated 10:37 AM ET, Sat April 4, 2020

“Of the 20 large metropolitan police departments that provided data to CNN, nine saw double-digit percentage jumps in domestic violence cases or 911 calls in March, either compared to the previous year or to earlier months in 2020.”

Healers Are at Risk



Mental Health Needs of Health Care Workers Providing Frontline COVID-19 Care

John Z. Ayanian, MD, MPP^{1,2}

JAMA Health Forum™

Mental health and stress conditions are treatable

... and people can get treatment under stay-at-home conditions.



**What can mayors do to support
people in the weeks and months
to come?**

Mental Health Supports Should be Leveraged

- **Universal Supports for Positive Coping** (WHO, CDC, SAMHASA, etc.)
- **Tele-mental Health Access**
 - Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act 2020: Allows Medicare beneficiaries to receive telehealth
 - Mandated telehealth coverage/parity by state governors or legislatures
 - Relaxed interjurisdictional tele-mental health regs by state boards
- **Crisis Hot-lines**
 - Disaster Distress Helpline, National Suicide, Prevention Lifeline, Crisis Text Line, Veterans Crisis Line
- **“Warm-lines”**
 - Non-crisis emotional support telephone lines staffed by peer volunteers

Key Responsibilities of Leaders

Messaging

- Amplify social distancing *and* alternative social connectivity (#AloneTogether); acknowledge link between economics and mental health concerns; amplify positive stories

Augment Access and Capacity

- Continuously update mental health resources & seek new opportunities (e.g. pastoral care helplines); outreach to vulnerable populations; partner with disaster mental health professionals

Key Responsibilities of Leaders

Mitigate Stigma

- Normalize mental health concerns & encourage help-seeking; employ mindful language (“People with Covid-19” not “Covid cases”)

Honor the Unspeakable

- Lead communities in grieving; speak honestly about losses; support new culturally-sensitive rituals



**How can mayors better recognize
and deal with their own levels of
stress?**

A Short Check List for Tracking Your Stress

- **Thinking:** Being easily distracted, unable to concentrate
- **Emotions:** Trouble relaxing, feeling irritable
- **Body:** Increase or decrease of energy, feeling restless, sweating, headaches, appetite and sleep changes
- **Behavior:** Blaming others or getting into arguments





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