Here is a summary of research on social distancing, quarantine, and isolation, as well as recommendations on how people can cope if asked to take such measures.

**What does Pastoral Care look like using social distancing?**
- checking in on people - especially at-risk populations
- listening to understand - use ‘active listening’ skills
- Pray over the phone, via Zoom, email or send short personal prayers via text
  *** however the person you are reaching out to communicates

**What to expect (& is important to validate):**
Common stresses include a decrease in:
- meaningful activities and social engagement
- financial strain from being unable to work
- a lack of access to one’s typical coping strategies (gym, yoga, worship)

Common experiences during social distancing, quarantine or isolation:
- fear, anxiety, trouble sleeping or focusing
- sadness, boredom or depression
- anger, frustration, or irritability

Vulnerable populations:
- single parents
- elderly
- immune-compromised (Auto-immune disorder, transplant recipients, cancer patients…)
- people who live alone (lonliness)
- nursing or mental health facility residents

**How to cope:**
- Limit news consumption to reliable sources.
  Find a News/Media versus non-News/Media balance
  Get your news from trusted sources, such as:
    - US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
    - US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
    - World Health Organization
  - Create and follow a daily routine - It helps keep a sense of order and purpose.
  - It is easier to ADD a behavior then it is to take away a behavior out of our routine
If we focus on what we can no longer do, we create our own suffering. Instead, focus on something that excites you, relaxes you, makes you a healthier person and focus on those benefits
Resources to Share
PCC Coordinator: Shauna Summers, LCPC
summers@igrc.org  ~  309.642.0262 talk/text

Stay virtually connected with others:
- **Access your social support - Don’t underestimate the power of your phone to connect**
  Use phone calls, text messages, video chat and social media
  *** If you’re feeling sad or anxious, talk to others about your experience
  ** Reach out to those you know who are in a similar situation
  * Facebook groups have already formed to support people asked to quarantine
- **Check-in with your church leaders**
  *** however THEY best communicate (voice, text, snail mail, email Facebook, Zoom..)
    - Zoom is HIPPA compliant -- great way to continue your small groups
- **Pets are wonderful for emotional support**
  *** No current evidence indicates that pets can contract or pass COVID-19 on
  ** Recommend restricting contact with pets if you contract COVID-19 until the
    risks of transmission between humans and animals are better understood
    https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle**
  *** Get enough sleep, eat well and exercise in your home to your physical ability
  ** Consider telehealth options for psychotherapy (phone or online options)

Stress management with psychological strategies:
- **Be thankful in what you’ve gained; see the silver lining**
  How often do we wish for more time at home? How could I use this time at home that would make
  my life better in some ways? Home projects? Learn something new (language, skill
  -mindfulness), spend time in nature has healing effects on anxiety and depression - at least open
  a window and enjoy the sounds and smells of the outdoors

- **Validate that this is a scary time - but don’t indulge in sharing gossip-like news**
  People could be seeking accurate information
  *** Keep yourself up-to-date on what is known and what is not known

- **Objectively examine your worries; be realistic about your concerns & coping ability**
  *** Try not to catastrophize; instead, focus on what you can do
  ** Accept the things you can't change: some helpful techniques:
    * Daily gratitude journal

- **Smartphone apps with mindfulness or relaxation exercises**
  *** PTSD Coach, free application with exercises for deep breathing, positive imagery,
    muscle relaxation and more (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ National Center for PTSD & Department of
    Defense’s National Center for Telehealth and Technology)
  ** Headspace, meditation, mindfulness, and sleep (paid) app. Learn to meditation in a few
    minutes a day with Headspace.
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- Focus on altruistic reasons for social distancing, quarantine or isolation
Remember that by taking such measures, you are reducing the possibility of transmitting COVID-19 and protecting those who are most vulnerable.

Social distancing and social isolation
- Watch for signs of isolation’s impact on mental health and those having difficulty coping.
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1.800.273.8255
  - Suicide Prevention (US Department of Veterans Affairs)

How to talk to children
  - After a Crisis: How Young Children Heal (PDF)
  - Ready Wrigley: Books, Posters and Check-lists for Kids and Families (CDC)
  - National Child Traumatic Stress Network
    NCTSN provides education and technical assistance for parents, schools, the media and behavioral health professionals who work with traumatic stress in children.
  - Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring The New Coronavirus
    NPR education reporter Cory Turner's story about what kids want to know about coronavirus spurred the creation of this comic.

LINKS

Articles:
COVID-19: Potential Implications for Individuals with Substance Use Disorders

The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it: Rapid review of the evidence
https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30460-8/fulltext

Coronavirus and Mental Health: Taking Care of Ourselves During Infectious Disease Outbreaks

Webpages:
National Suicide Prevention Hotline https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

Veteran Affairs: Mental Health https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/

CDC Preparedness for Families https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/readywrigley/index.htm

American Veterinary Medical Association https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19

PDF links:
Helping Young Children Heal
https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//after_a_crisis_helping_young_children_heal.pdf