



# HO-CHUNK NATION DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Jess Weeden MSW, APSW and JennieLynn Hastings MS

## Reducing Stress in Challenging Times

During times of uncertainty, it can be especially hard to deal with stress, depression and anxiety which may creep in from time to time. This is especially true when some of our “go-to” coping skills are unavailable to us such as spending times with friends, going out to a movie, or doing activities in public. There are ways to reduce feelings of depression, stress, and anxiety. Not all coping skills will fit all people so it is best to experiment to see what works for you.

Keeping a routine is important. Even if your schedules have changed, try to establish a routine that you do daily as it will assist with keeping your mind focused on the next steps, next goals...moving forward. It can be easy to fall into a rut of not getting dressed or not practicing healthy hygiene, but it is important to continue. Try to continue to eat healthy, exercise regularly, maintain a healthy sleep cycle. Being active naturally lifts moods, reduces stress, and restores energy.

Other ideas to consider include the following:

Creativity and mental stimulation including board games, card games, solitary games, computer games, games online, games can be uplifting and can help pass time. This can include puzzles such as sudoku or crossword puzzles. Making music, listening to music, sewing, beading, crocheting, painting, journaling, writing. Flexing your creative muscles and learning new skills can reduce feelings of stress and art is therapeutic.

Connecting from afar such as writing letters, text messages, making phone calls, having Zoom or FaceTime meetings can reduce the feelings of isolation. If you have family or pets at home, be sure to take time to play and spend time together.

Relaxation and healthy mindful exercise such as yoga, meditation, affirmations, guided imagery, prayers, can be uplifting and reduce stress. You can find several options on Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXOAXaeCv5s>. Take time to embrace your breath. One technique is Square Breathing: Breathe in for four seconds, hold for four seconds, exhale for four seconds, hold for four seconds. Repeat as needed.

Emotional Wellbeing includes letting yourself feel emotions. It is ok to cry and be afraid, having a good cry can be healing. Rain heals the earth in a similar fashion. Write down your worries on paper and rip them into small pieces. This can be satisfying and reduce frustration about the things that we cannot control.

Its ok to reach out for professional help, call your therapist to talk over the phone.

In difficult and stressful times, it may seem hard to do but have gratitude. Make a list of what you are thankful for in your everyday life. Look at all of the wonderful opportunities you have to connect to yourself and your family in new ways. You have the breath of life, you have the ability to walk upon Mother Earth and witness all of the beauty in our world. Smile, and remember this is temporary.

**Ho-Chunk Health Care Center**  
N6520 Lumberjack Guy Road  
Black River Falls, WI 54615  
Ph. 715-284-9851 FAX 715-284-5150

**House of Wellness**  
S2845 White Eagle Rd  
Baraboo, WI 53913  
Ph. 888-552-7889 FAX 608-355-9643