



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

*Behavioral Health Division*

## *Milwaukee County*

### **Milwaukee County Offers Advice and Resources for People Suffering from Social Isolation**

***Statement by:***

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We've all been asked to reduce our direct contact with others in an effort to slow the spread of the novel Coronavirus. Schools are closed, people are working from home, there may be fewer people in stores and restaurants, events and even churches have closed down, and we don't shake hands as often. Altogether, these steps and many others go by the name "social distancing." Until maybe a week ago, few if any of us had ever heard that term. Now, social distancing is changing our lives.

Social distancing is also saving lives. That's why we're doing it, to save lives. The changes you're making every day, the sacrifices, the disruptions, are slowing the spread of the virus and saving the lives of men and women in your neighborhood, your community, your state, and around the world. You're a soldier in an army of billions, doing your part to keep others alive and healthy. It's important, and it only works if we do it together. So, right here, let us say thank you for all you're doing and will continue to do. The world needs you, and you're doing your part.

But it's important to be careful that social distancing doesn't become social isolation. Distancing saves lives, but isolation makes those lives harder than they need to be. We are not designed to be isolated. We are social creatures, so be sure to stay in touch with friends and loved ones. Call, text, video-chat, and use all that fancy technology we have available, but say hi to friends and neighbors, too. Maybe go out of your way to wave and greet one another, even strangers, while we keep our distance of course. Hold doors open (with a foot or elbow, not your hand, is best), and make eye contact with the people around you. Smile. Do everything you can to make and keep connections with others around you who are, after all, your fellow soldiers practicing social distancing to save lives and defeat a virus.

If you have or care for children, their lives are disrupted too. School is out, schedules are ruined, and regular play may not be possible. But children need to play. They need to have fun, be touched, be held, just not by quite so many different people.

Some of us will find all this harder than others. Anxiety, depression, or just worry may get the best of us. Don't keep that to yourself. Talk to people, your people, or a professional if you think you need to. There are people who can help, who want to help, because taking care of you is part of this too.



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### **24-Hour Crisis Line**

Individuals in need of support are encouraged to call **Milwaukee County's 24-Hour Crisis Line at 414-257-7222**. Clinicians will offer support and guidance and connect callers to available resources. People can also call 2-1-1 directly for assistance. **IMPACT 2-1-1** provides a coordinated entry point for those in need. During times of personal crisis or community disaster, the free, confidential helpline and online resource directory make it easy for residents to get connected to information and assistance.

For more information about COVID-19, visit/email:

- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services:  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/covid-19.htm>

Email the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families:

[DCFBCOVID19@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFBCOVID19@wisconsin.gov)

For information on coping with social isolation, visit:

- American Psychological Association:  
<https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/research-information/social-distancing>

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