

THANK YOU!

We feel deep gratitude for the Rev. Dr. Pamela Cooper-White and Bishop Chilton Knudsen, who shed light on family violence, substance use and mental health as they relate to the current pandemic. Let us continue to pray for one another and be aware of the signs the people in our community may be exhibiting.

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SUMMARY

During times of crisis and uncertainty, rates of violence, substance use, and mental health concerns tend to rise. Below are some resources to help you and those you serve stay safe and healthy during this challenging time.

- People tend to go through a range of emotions during a disaster which can look very similar to other types of grief processes. We call this the [Emotional Life Cycle of a Disaster](#).
- The [Life Cycle during COVID-19](#) will likely have a longer period of disillusionment given how long the quarantines and severe economic impacts are likely to last. Because of the length of this difficult period, it's important for church leaders to be aware of the kinds of impacts this acute stress can have including: substance abuse, family violence, mental health challenges and suicide.
- Work on **developing a safety plan** if you are worried about violence. Shelters and other essential operations are still open and follow guidelines to help keep people healthy. Everyone should be aware of what triggers their anger are and what actions you can take to diffuse it.
- It is possible in some locations to adapt **12-step meeting** so that they adhere to social distancing guidelines (no more than 10 people, least six feet apart, ideally outdoors), but there are also many online options. If you have closed meetings temporarily at your site, be sure to leave signs on your doors letting people know how they can get in touch with the local Central Service Office to find alternative locations/methods of connecting.
- Now is the time to research your **local service providers**. Which ones are still open? Which mental health providers have telemedicine options?
- **Risk factors for suicide:** 1. Do they have a plan? 2. Is there a history of attempt or relative who has died by suicide? 3. Do they have access to means? If you do not feel comfortable assessing risk for suicide, this is a good to reach out to a colleague to refresh those skills.

- Everyone, even those without prior histories of substance abuse, family violence or mental health conditions, may very well be struggling with those issues now or in the coming weeks. **Please ask everyone about their substance use, family relationships, and mental wellness in your pastoral check-in calls.** This will help normalize that these issues might emerge and that their church community is a safe place to bring them.
- Caregivers will likely experience **symptoms of secondary traumatic stress.** Try to practice self care and set boundaries around your exposure to grief and heartbreak. This is going to last for a long time so please care for yourself knowing that this is a marathon and not a sprint.
- Please visit [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's](#), [National Alliance on Mental Illness's](#), and [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's](#) websites for additional mental health and COVID-19 content.

In addition to local organizations, please reach out to these organizations. You can call for yourself or because you are concerned about someone else.

- National Domestic Violence Hotline **1-800-799-7233**
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline **1-800-662-4357**
- AA Meeting Locator **1-844-334-6862**
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline **1-800-273-8255**
- [Other Crisis Resources](#)

We will post additional information on COVID-19 to our website.

Follow Episcopal Relief & Development on social media and our Faith-based Response to Epidemics [webpage](#) for updates.

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