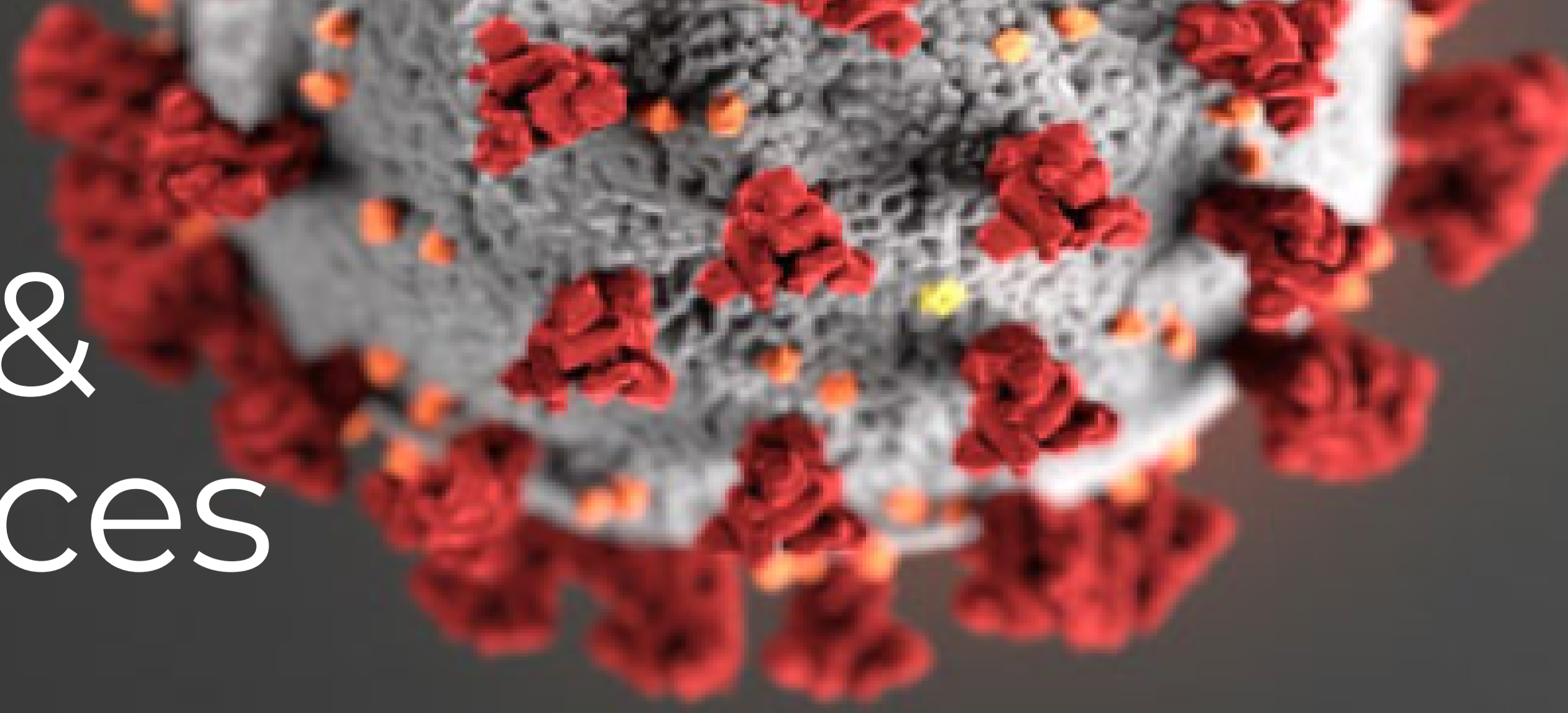


COVID-19 Mental Health & Coping Resources

F O R E V E R Y O N E



With so much uncertainty around this pandemic, it's completely normal to feel concerned or scared. Vaile Wright, Director of Clinical Research and Quality at the American Psychological Association, says much anxiety around COVID-19 comes from fear of the unknown. Here are 3 steps you can take to manage that fear.

1 Breathe

Inhale deeply through your nose and exhale through your mouth

When we are triggered by fear, our physiological stress response clouds much of our cognitive functionality. By taking deep, intentional breaths, we activate our parasympathetic nervous system, which counters the threat response. Intentional breathing is the gateway to re-access our rational thinking. Taking 3 deep breaths brings you into the present moment where you become more aware of what you can control..



2 Recognize "catastrophic" thinking

Catastrophic thinking is a type of cognitive distortion or "thinking trap" that focuses solely on negative outcomes

In the absence of certainty, humans have a tendency to jump to worst case scenarios. This can be exacerbated by the amount and types of media we are consuming. "Because the mind works off the power of suggestion, when we keep hearing about the dangers of COVID-19, we visualize what it would be like to be sick or to know someone who is sick. Then we get scared as the outbreak is something we can't control," says Esther Saggurthi, primary clinician at Maryland House Detox. The best way to get out of catastrophic thinking is to remind yourself that you can't control the trajectory of the virus, but you can redirect your own thoughts to tangible ways to create your own plan.



3 Create your plan

Assess what you can do to keep you and your loved ones safe

Limit your consumption of news and focus on facts from trusted sources such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC) or World Health Organization so you know exactly what you can do to build your immunity and prevent the spread of germs. Turn to family and friends for emotional support. If you are having trouble coping, take advantage of mental health services.

