

Maintaining Mental Health and Wellbeing When the Physical Health Risks to the Community are Real



A Resource for Connecticut College Campus Community Members from Student Counseling Services

A (Brief) Overview of Our Present Circumstances and This Resource

The Sitch (the present situation)

The Nation and our fellow [global community members](#) are facing the rapid spread of [COVID-19](#). Some community members are particularly vulnerable to the highly infectious virus. While college students are not among the more vulnerable, we recognize that disruption in your daily life, travel plans, and educational pursuits experience related to COVID-19 may be [distressing](#). This document is meant to serve as a tool to assist you in your efforts to manage that distress in a healthy manner.



At SCS we know that [information](#) about mental health and wellbeing should be accessible to everyone. Information [empowers](#) you to take [ownership](#) of your wellness and to pursue health effectively. Accordingly, we have included links throughout this resource to assist you in coping ahead.

The Symptoms (of distress related to COVID-19)

- Increased anxiety about “what’s going on” - in the world and in your immediate surroundings
 - What’s going on is worrisome
 - However fear contagion, representation bias, and social amplification may [increase distress](#)
- Exacerbation of [existing](#) mental health concerns
- Update/information burnout = real → staying informed can be exhausting!
- Distress related to disruption of routine
 - Tips for coping with distress related to being required to [self-quarantine](#)



The Solution: DEVELOP A COPING PLAN!

Establish a **wellness strategy** incorporating:

1. Accurate knowledge about the present situation
2. General knowledge about psychological functioning
3. Specific knowledge about your psychological functioning
 - Existing mental health concerns
 - Triggers
 - Past experiences
 - Things that have always worked well in terms of coping
4. Tried-and-true mental healthcare strategies
5. Communal **connection** and ethical engagement with others



Coping Plan Content

Managing Covid-19 Related Anxiety

1. **Know** the facts → accurate information is key
2. **Follow** recommended health safety measures → knowing that you're doing all that you can do to prevent the spread/risk to self and others is important.
 - a. When worry arises you may accurately state to yourself "I am doing all that I can do and that's enough"
3. **Limit exposure** to the fast-paced cycle of information → limit the frequency of checking for updates
 - a. Here some information about why/how the news cycle exacerbates anxiety and related suggestions for coping
4. **Take care** of the basics
 - a. Get physical exercise and activity regularly
 - b. Eat as well and regularly as you are able
 - c. Work toward consistent adequate sleep
5. **Establish** a (new, if necessary) routine → especially if your living, studying, situation has changed
6. **Engage** in mindfulness practices → Incorporate this into your day-to-day practices



Mindful Practices and Resources

- Suggestions for use of ([free](#)) mindfulness resources to facilitate understanding and practice
 - Learn how mindfulness [works](#) (neurologically speaking)
 - Start your days [mindfully](#)
 - Visual and auditory [stimuli](#) for independent mindful reflection
 - [Guided meditation audio files](#)



General Coping Strategies to Facilitate Resilience

1. Practice daily [affirmations](#)
2. Create time and space for intentional moments of **counter-situational levity**
 - Have a private dance party in your room (or in your head if you don't have access to a private space)
 - Have a communal (even with just one other person) dance party while maintaining 6 feet of space
3. Engage in **reflective practices**
 - Journaling & talking it out
4. Pursue **creative processing** - use your creative outlets as a means of coping
 - Narrative writing
 - Lyrics and poetry
 - Music & Visual art → Create a piece for the AHA Project!





CONNECTICUT COLLEGE
STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICES AND
STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES
PRESENTS

THE AFFIRMING HEALING ART (AHA) PROJECT

Seeking student contributions of artwork to hang
throughout the Health Center

- AFFIRMING OF MULTIPLE INTERSECTING IDENTITIES
 - ABLE TO SPEAK TO RESILIENCE AND HOPE
 - VISUALLY ENGAGING
- 



ARTWORK THAT
SPEAKS TO THE
BEAUTY, DIVERSITY,
AND COMPLEXITY OF
THE HUMAN PSYCHE
AND ITS RESILIENCE

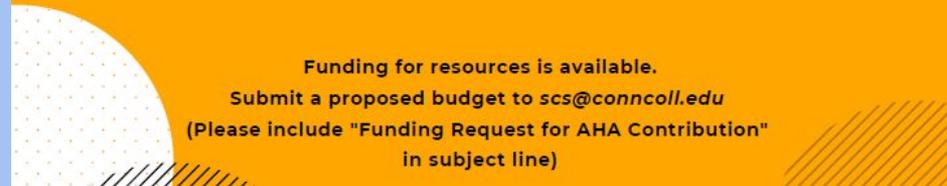
PIECES CAN TAKE THE FORM OF
ANY MEDIUM AS LONG AS THE
WORK IS EASY TO AFFIX TO WALLS

All pieces must be submitted to the Health
Center for review and selection

Pieces will become permanent fixtures of
the Health Center

Funding for resources is available.

Submit a proposed budget to scs@conncoll.edu
(Please include "Funding Request for AHA Contribution"
in subject line)



Communal Coping and Ethical Engagement

A unique component of the present situation is that it impacts our campus, local, and global communities. Connecting with others during **communal** or shared times of **distress** facilitates **healthy coping** and reduces isolation. That makes the coping strategies below particularly helpful:

1. Maintain ethical engagement practices → Treat others well during this difficult time
 - a. Make sure you don't allow fear and stigma lead to scapegoating and mistreating people who fall ill
2. Maintain regular communication with loved ones
3. Prioritize moments of connection with others
4. Use technology to foster connections (especially when social distancing is recommended)

Additional Resources

General Resources:

- Center for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- World Health Organization:
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Conn-specific Resources:

- Connecticut College updates:
<https://www.conncoll.edu/campus-life/student-health-services/coronavirus/>
- Student Counseling Services:
<https://www.conncoll.edu/campus-life/student-counseling-services/>