



ISRAEL TRAUMA COALITION  
response. preparedness. resilience.

## ITC: Frequently Asked Questions on Coronavirus

Public health authorities both in Israel and around the world are acting to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. However, this crisis is generating tremendous stress throughout the population.

Over the last few weeks we were all facing a new reality and trying to support the mental and psychosocial well-being of individuals, communities, teams and leadership during the outbreak.

Based upon ITC experience dealing with the psychosocial aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic we have repeatedly encountered the following inquiries and thought to share our answers with you. For further information please have a look at our website at <http://israeltraumacoalition.org/> and feel free to send questions/enquiries to [Max@itc-office.org.il](mailto:Max@itc-office.org.il).

Looking forward to sharing better and healthier times.

### Messages for the general population

1. Minimize watching, reading or listening to news about COVID-19; access information only from trusted sources so that you can take practical steps to prepare your plans and protect yourself and loved ones. Seek information updates at specific times during the day, once or twice a day.

2. Protect yourself and be supportive to others. Assisting others in their time of need can benefit both the person receiving support and the helper. For example, check by telephone on neighbors or people in your community who may need some extra assistance.

3. Engage in healthy activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy food.

### Messages for leaders and managers working with vulnerable populations

4. Build a questionnaire for volunteers to use while reaching out to vulnerable population groups (elderly, people in isolation, special needs) to map their needs, current and expected, in this emergency.

5. Psycho education- send written guidelines to different populations. Please go to <http://israeltraumacoalition.org/> for examples.

6. Establish a support hotline manned by trained professionals to provide better visibility of who needs assistance, what kind of assistance and to provide first emotional support. It should be accessible to as wide a target audience as possible. The service is anonymous and does not require identification or disclosure as a condition of receipt. The service would operate in the following areas: Providing emotional support, information on community services, referrals when necessary, detecting at-risk persons and working with rescue forces when needed.

### Messages for parents and children

7. Discuss COVID-19 with your children in an honest and age-appropriate way. If your children have concerns, addressing them together may ease their anxiety. Children will observe adults' behaviors and emotions for cues on how to manage their own emotions during difficult times. See attached.

8. Help children find positive ways to express feelings such as fear and sadness. Children feel relieved if they can express and communicate their feelings in a safe and supportive environment.

9. Maintain familiar routines in daily life as much as possible.

10. Provide engaging age-appropriate activities for children, including activities for their learning.

11. Explain that we are all doing everything we can to keep us safe, provide age-appropriate information, assure them that we are all in this together, that it is ok to be afraid but also to believe that things will be ok.

### Messages for maintaining a sense of community

12. Working together as one community can help to create solidarity. Spread the message that we are in this together.

13. Re-Build and create community life in this new reality - conduct community events differently, in compliance with the official guidance (example – online bar-mitzvah celebration, Hebrew language class by Skype, concert from balconies/front yards, lessons, group meetings etc).

14. Build, as detailed as possible, a mapping of community resources – who can help and how, share information on existing volunteering programs and support groups, share networks, material resources, donations, mutual assistance, specialists in mental health, social workers, teachers. Share all this information widely.

15. Use positive messaging – focus on what is and not on what isn't, we are not helpless, there are things we can do (example - observance of social distancing is an action of coping, not the act of weakness). Dig deep and source the values and personages that community members can identify with and use as an anchor of community resilience.