

## **Emotional Impact of the Pandemic on Families Information Sheet**

### *Key points:*

- “The COVID-19 pandemic is a perfect storm of stressors, involving acute crisis and loss events, disruptions in many aspects of life, and ongoing multi-stress challenges with evolving conditions.” (Walsh 2020)
- The cultural myth of the self-reliant “rugged individual” may lead to ordinary feelings of vulnerability or reliance on others seeming like weakness, resulting in isolation or burn-out.
- Vulnerability is part of the human condition & distress is a normal response to abnormal circumstances.
- We are relational beings & recognition of our mutual dependence on one another is vital to well-being.
- In turning to others for help, we can then ‘pay help back and pay it forward’.
- We are all living through this crisis together & we need & depend on each other for our future.

### *Family adaptation:*

For families, adaptation may be enhanced by:

- Tolerance for different reactions / ways of coping
- Nurturing & maintaining ‘realistic hope’
- Accepting that healing & resilience takes place gradually, over time (be kind to yourself!)
- Strategies of ‘Reaching, Up, Down, In & Around’
- Practicing ‘physical distancing’ rather than ‘social distancing’ – we experience both loss of in-person connection & new possibilities for virtual connection.
- Identifying what you have done & what others have done during this crisis which you most appreciate / value.

## *References*

Fraenkel, P. & Wonyoung, L. Cho (2020) Reaching Up, Down, In & Around: Couple & Family Coping During the Coronavirus Pandemic, *Family Process*. 59:2, pp. 847-864.

Lebow, J.L. (2020) Family in the Age of COVID-19, *Family Process*. Retrieved from the Internet: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7273068>

Walsh, F. (2020) Loss & Resilience in the Time of COVID- 19: Meaning Making, Hope & Transcendence, *Family Process*. 59:3, pp. 898-911.

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