Ministry Tips in Uncertain Times

What to Keep in Mind When Providing Care:

1. **Look to Reliable Sources:** the CDC, WHO, your state health department (MN, IA, AK, NE, CA).

2. **Avoid “this is all part of God’s plan,” or “there’s a reason for everything”:** These aren’t very helpful during crises because they jump over emotions too quickly.

3. **Remain Calm, Listen, and Validate Emotions:** One of the most effective ways to show you care.

4. **Resist Fixing or Advising:** Accompany others non-judgmentally while they identify their own meaning.

5. **Depend on Community:** Seek creative ways to celebrate our connectedness – virtually or otherwise.

6. **Be Real with God:** God can handle all our anger, sadness, fear, and loneliness. Facilitate honest prayer with others; try praying one of the psalms, below.

7. **Take Breaks:** Know your limits and the limits of others. Set intentional times to give screens and your emotions a rest. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

8. **Remember God’s Promises:** God’s transformative love is always at work and God never abandons us, even in the darkest moments. Joy, Hope, and Love have their place in these times, too.

**Check-in Questions to Ask:** (courtesy of Dr. Jeff Kaster)

- **Emotionally/Mentally** – What is your strongest feeling right now? Do you feel stable or uneasy in your own feelings?
- **Socially** – Do you feel connected or isolated? How are you working to maintain relationships?
- **Grief** – What is the biggest loss you feel with all this change?
- **Spiritually** – Have you been able to maintain a relationship with God? How is prayer in your home? Does Mass fulfill you online?
Coping Techniques to Try and Share:

- **Mindful Breathing:** In...2...3...4, Out...2...3...4
- **Meditate with a Short Prayer:** ex. I trust you God, Serenity Prayer, a favorite line of scripture
- **Sing a Taizé Refrain:** Nada te turbe, Wait for the Lord, Confitenimi Domino, Bless the Lord [Spotify](https://open.spotify.com/search/taize)
- **Try Contemplative Prayer:** Lectio or Visio Divina, Imaginative prayer with scripture, [Centering](https://www.opusdei.org/en/knowledge/centering/) or [Focusing](https://www.opusdei.org/en/knowledge/focusing/)
- **Engage your Body:** take a walk or run, practice yoga, stretch, play outside
- **Find a Creative Outlet:** color, paint, make music, write, dance, cook
- **Read Poetry:** poetry can use metaphor and language to describe difficult situations
- **Eat Regularly, Drink Water, Sleep:** these seem obvious, but can be the first things we forget
- **Do Something You Enjoy Each Day**

Psalms to Pray:

- **Lament:** Psalms 6, 13, 16, 31, 40, 42, 102, 143
- **Trust:** Psalms 23, 25, 27, 91, 121, 131, 139
- **Praise and Thanksgiving:** Psalms 30, 33, 34, 46, 103, 104, 118

If you can’t find what you need here, reach out to an [SJUfaith](https://www.opusdei.org/en/sjufaith/) staff member or [CSBSJU Counseling and Health Promotion](https://www.opusdei.org/en/knowledge/counseling/). Trust that God is with you as you strive to be with others and care for yourself. IOGD.