

Emotional Support for Seniors

**Practical strategies for anxiety
and stress related to COVID-19**



northern health
the northern way of caring

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Introduction

Many people may be wondering how they can help provide emotional support for seniors while still practicing physical distancing. This is a hard time for many, but it's important to remember that some elderly neighbours may be self-isolating alone and are missing out on their usual interactions with friends and family.

There are many things you can do to provide support to seniors, from helping them pick up necessary supplies and groceries, to calling and checking in. Even a 10 minute phone call can help provide emotional support and fight loneliness.

We've created this short document which includes practical strategies for dealing with anxiety and stress related to COVID-19.

The document includes advice on keeping routines, eating healthy, and important financial relief information from both the provincial and federal governments.

There is also space where you can make note of updated grocery shopping hours for seniors and an area where you can record important phone numbers so your elderly loved one can still stay in contact with friends and family, as well as continue with medical appointments.

Grounding exercise

Take 5 long, slow deep breaths. Now try the exercise below. This can help to bring a sense of calmness.



Create a schedule for the day

Break your day up into smaller chunks. Try to include things you enjoy like crafting or watching a movie you love. See the example below.

8:00 am	9:00 am	10:30 am	12:00 pm	2:00 pm	3:00 pm	7:00 pm
Morning stretches	Laundry	Call a friend and have a coffee Prepare a meal	Prepare a meal	Craft work	Spend time in the yard	Watch a movie

Use the blank one below to create some ideas to help build a schedule in your day.

Creating a routine: things to remember

BE CONSISTENT

- Try to go to bed and wake at the same time each day.
- Get washed and dressed every day.
- Stay hydrated and eat well.

STAY ACTIVE

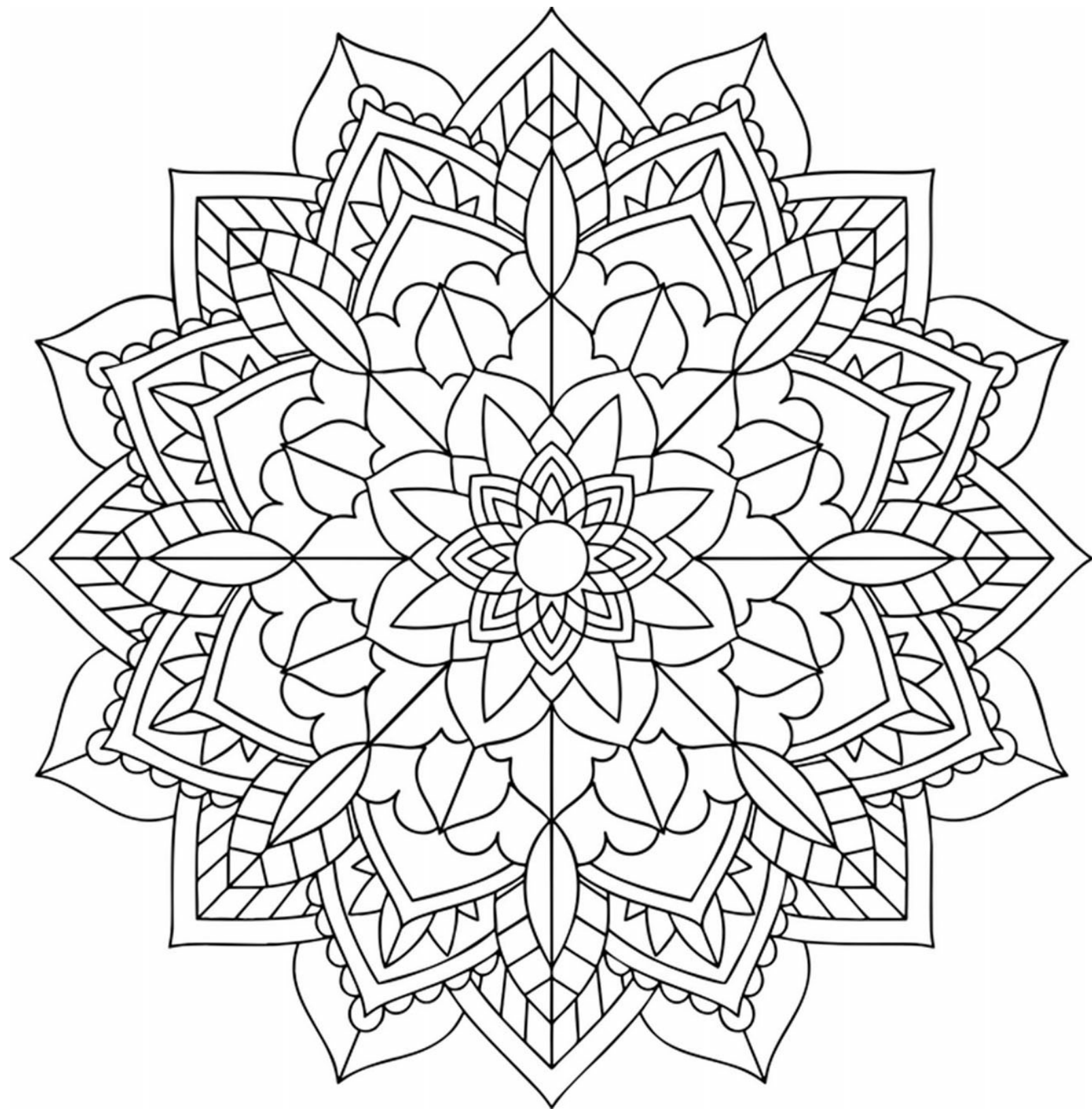
- Try to go outside daily, remember to continue to do physical distancing.
- Try and move every day.
- Connect with others.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

- Find a quiet space to retreat to.
- Expect to feel uncomfortable, your routine has been disrupted. Be gentle with yourself, and others.
- Limit social media, this can cause undue anxiety.
- Try to notice the good around you. What has gone well today? Who made you smile?
- Think about things you can control. Sort items in your home. Finish that craft project.
- Maybe start a new project.
- Try to find lightness and humor in your day. It's good to laugh.
- Break up your day.
- Reach out for help.

THIS IS TEMPORARY AND WILL PASS.

Take a break to colour



Staying in contact

Keeping in contact with family, friends, and other support people is helpful. Be sure to ask for help when needed. It can be helpful to write a list of people to call and when.

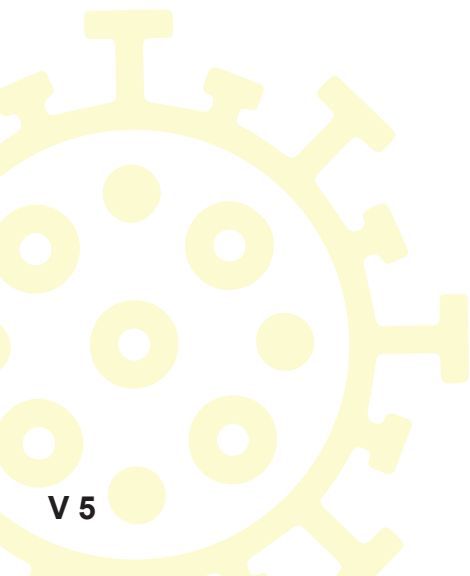
Family doctor or nurse practitioner		
Pharmacist		
Northern Health support		
Other community support		

Healthy eating

Anxiety can change what, when, and how much you eat. For example, you might:

- **Eat more or less than usual, more or less often, in response to your body's cues of hunger, fullness, and satisfaction.**
- **Enjoy more comfort foods as part of your meals and snacks.**
- **Make do with the foods you have available, versus your usual foods.**

Trust yourself to know what's best for you.



Healthy eating

**Have plenty of
vegetables and fruits**

Eat protein foods

**Make water
your drink
of choice**



**Choose
whole grain
foods**



Healthy eating

Having food in your home is the first step to comforting and tasty meals and snacks. Make and follow a grocery list to keep your shopping trip short. Or share the list with someone who can pick these items up from the store for you. Don't forget to take advantage of seniors' hour at your local grocery store, if available!

Managing information about COVID-19

People will be talking lots about COVID-19 and sharing resources which may not always be truthful. This can cause increased anxiety. Be sure to get health information from reliable sources such as:

BC 211 (call 2-1-1)
www.bc211.ca/

The Northern Health website
www.northernhealth.ca

BC Centre for Disease Control website
www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19

NH INFO LINE

COVID-19 Online Clinic and Information Line for
Northern BC residents

1-844-645-7811

Financial supports during COVID-19

Housing and Supplemental Income

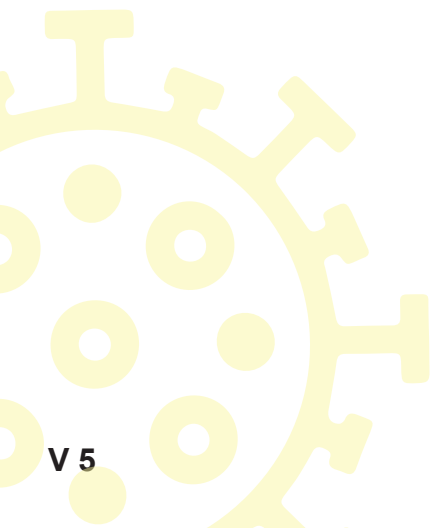
Support	Description	How to Access
Seniors Existing programs continue	Existing programs continue Old Age Security (\$614/ mo max)	Eligible seniors automatically enrolled.
BC Hydro	Bill deferral, payment plans, crisis funding	Call 1-800-BC-Hydro
Freeze on rental rates	No rent increases are allowed in BC April 1	
BC Temporary Rental Supplement (BC-TRS)	Provides up to \$500/ month towards rent, paid directly to landlords	Applications open mid- April www.bchousing.org/ COVID-19
Mortgages (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMMHC) insured)	Mortgage payment deferrals for CMHC- insured loans	Check with lender
Mortgages (non-CMHC)	Check with lender about deferrals	
Emergency Housing	Existing shelters are still active	Call 2-1-1
Employment Insurance (EI)	Existing EI benefits continues provides up to \$573/week	Apply online: www.canada.ca/en/ services/benefits/ei/ei- regular-benefit.html
EI Sickness	One week waiting period waived	Call 1-833-381-2725
BC Emergency Benefit	One-time additional tax- free payment of \$1000 to those on EI or CERB	www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/ content/employment- business/covid-19- financial-supports/ emergency-benefit- workers

Housing and supplemental income continued

Support	Description	How to Access
GST Credit	One-time boost up to \$600 per eligible couple, \$400 for eligible individuals. Payment July.	Linked with tax return
Income Assistance	Existing programs continue	Call 1-866-866-0800
People with Disabilities	Existing programs continue	Call 1-866-866-0800

Other useful information

Support	Description	How to Access
Income Tax Return	Filing due date is deferred to 1st June. Payments deferred to 31st August	
Registered Retirement Income Funds (RRIFs)	Minimum withdrawals from RRIFs reduced by 25% for 2020	



Other useful information

Location	Open Hours/Days

References:

- CAMH, 2020, Quarantine and Isolation, Available online at: <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19#quarantine>
- Margie Donlon, 2020, Cited Pacific Northwest Division of Family Practice
- 100% Free Mandalas by Just Color, Available online at: <https://www.free-mandalas.net/>