

If you're feeling stressed or depressed, talk to your healthcare provider to get the help you need.

Key Points:

1. Many people have had a hard time during the COVID-19 pandemic and feel depressed or anxious.
2. Counseling and mental health care help you to learn to process your emotions in a healthy way, so you feel better.
3. Many clinics have information about how to find a mental health professional, and about resources to help you pay.



Rural Women's
Health Project
www.rwhp.org



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Seeking help, finding strength



Anna, are you alright, dear?
You look worried.



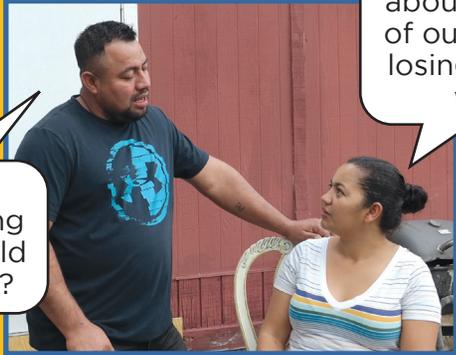
I just feel sad
sometimes,
Luis.



The pandemic
has made life
really hard.



I know. I always worry about losing my job. How would we feed the kids?



Definitely. I worry about taking care of our family- and losing the people we love!

My friend Alma, from work, lost her parents.



Now she is sad and distracted all the time.



I told her to go to the clinic to ask about mental health care.

Mental health care? Like counseling? But isn't that for people who are...unstable?



No, counseling is for everyone! We all need support sometimes.

But how can counseling fix anything? It's just a lot of talk.



Talking to a counselor helps you work through your emotions.

It doesn't make the problem go away, but you learn to manage.



Luis, I am thinking of going to counseling for myself. I just can't stop being anxious.

There are some programs that offer help with payment.

I don't know... how would we pay for it? We are struggling just to pay our bills.



And, I think it is important.

I guess that's a good idea. I don't want you to worry anymore, Ana.



I will always worry a little, I'm a mom!



...but maybe I can learn to manage my worries better.



MENTAL HEALTH OUTREACH GUIDE

“Seeking Help, Finding Strength”

1. Initial dialogue

Start with an introduction, like this one:

“Hi, my name is [name]. I’m an outreach worker with [organization]. I’d love to talk with you about mental health. How have you been feeling this past year?”

Give the participants a chance to respond, then say:

“I’d love to discuss this with you, so here are some materials to get our conversation started.”

2. Read the *fotonovela* out loud with the workers

Training Tip

If you’re talking to multiple people, assign them parts and have them act out the script!

3. Discussion

After reviewing the materials, ask one of the participants to give a brief summary of the story.





Then, discuss the following questions:

- a. What has been especially difficult for you and your family during the pandemic?
- b. What do you do when you're feeling sad or worried?
- c. What has given you comfort or hope this past year? What are 1-2 things that keep you grounded when you're stressed?
- d. Is mental health something that you talk about in your family and community?
- e. What was something new you learned from the *fotonovela*?
- f. What other resources or services could be helpful for you and your family?

4. Resources

Before the session, look up the contact information of local people and organizations that can help participants learn more. Write them down here.

Then, use these resources to help you answer any questions and to connect people to the services they need.

- *General resource for mental health support: 1-800-273-8255*
- *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) helpline: 1-800-985-5990*
- *CDC How Right Now:*
<https://www.cdc.gov/howrightnow/espanol/index.html>
- *Phone number of a local health center or Department of Health: _____*
- *Other phone numbers: _____*





Training Tips

- Throughout the discussion, check in with participants and observe their body language to see how they're feeling.
- Point people to resources so they have reliable information to consult when they feel unsure.
- Offer to continue the conversation with them later, if needed.

5. Key Points

Before finishing, review these key points:

- a. Many people have had a hard time during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some feel sad, depressed, stressed or anxious. These are treatable emotional health problems.
- b. Therapy and mental health care help you learn to process your emotions in a healthy way, so you feel a bit better. Talking to someone else is important!
- c. Many clinics have information about how to find a mental health professional, and about resources to help you pay.



Action items!

Remind participants to:

- Reach out to your healthcare provider if you're feeling anxious or depressed
- Ask about programs such as Medicaid and sliding fee scales that offer affordable mental health care
- There are also free help lines you can call when you feel down, and they are in your language.

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