

# Caring for Our Caregivers During the Pandemic

JT HUNTER

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President/CEO, REMT Care partner Coaching &  
Consulting, LLC

Our mission is to help Educate, Enlighten, and Empower all care partners and caregivers, especially those caring for someone with Alzheimer's or related dementia. We are committed to helping care partners and care givers learn, grow, and become aware of their inner strengths. Our knowledge and experience enable us to offer effective, individualized, support and guidance throughout the care giving journey. We believe you are just as important as the person for whom you care, and REMT is invested in supporting both of you!

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It may feel like the whole world is turned upside down!



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It can feel like all eyes are on you!

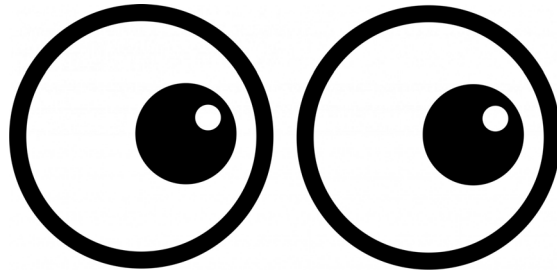
**You do care for the most vulnerable to this illness!**

**Deaths are occurring.**

**The CDC, other health related organizations, are suggesting that families contact you to check on their family members.**

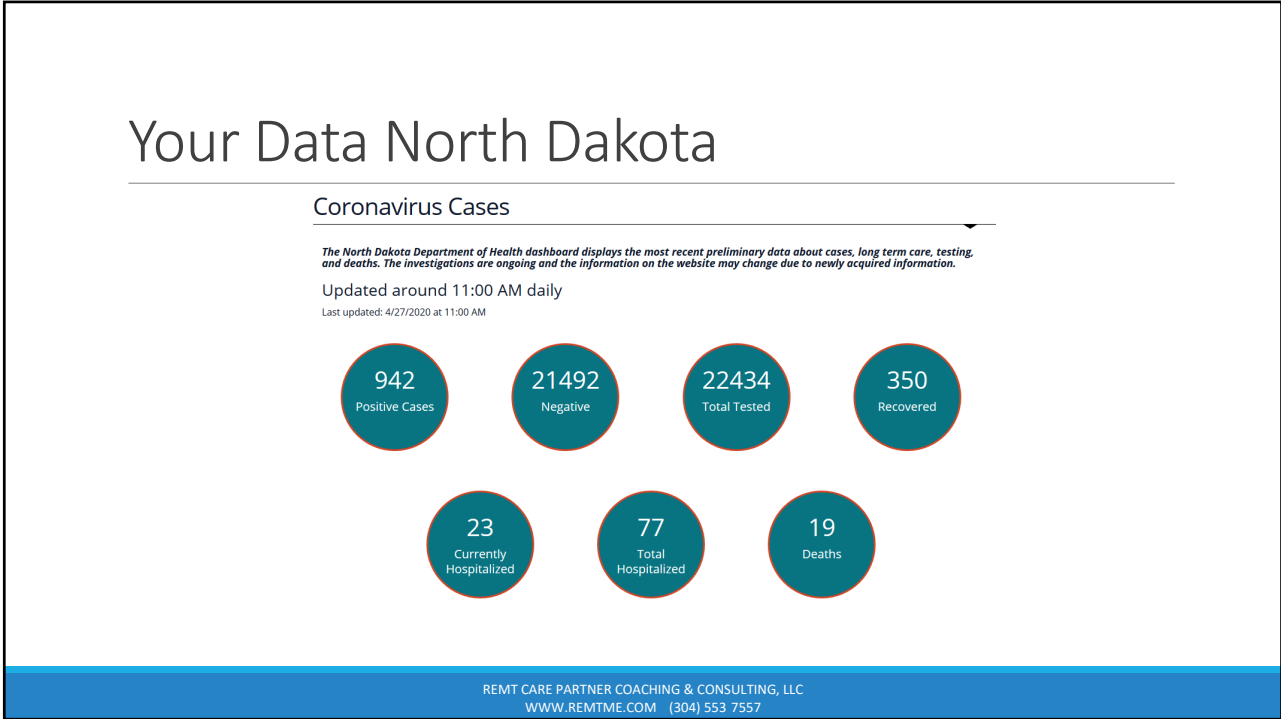
**Fear by some to seek treatment for non Covid 19 related illness or injuries.**

**Angry family members may resent your new restrictions.**

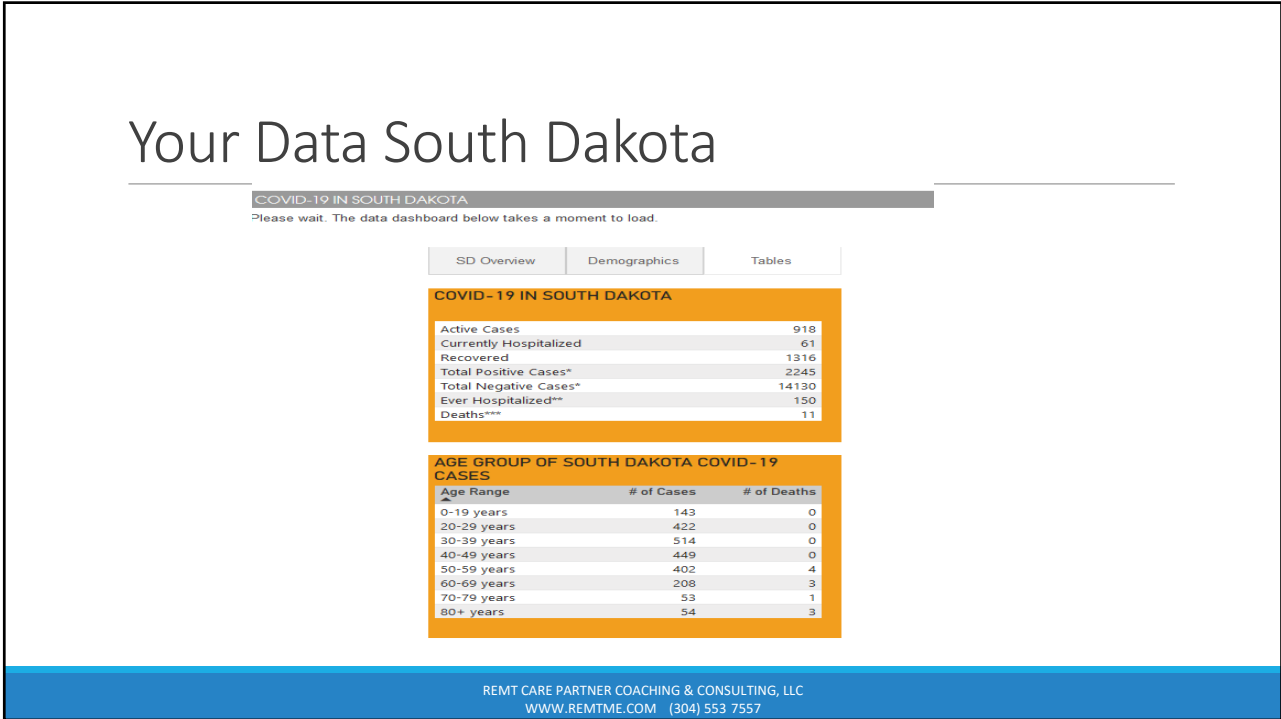


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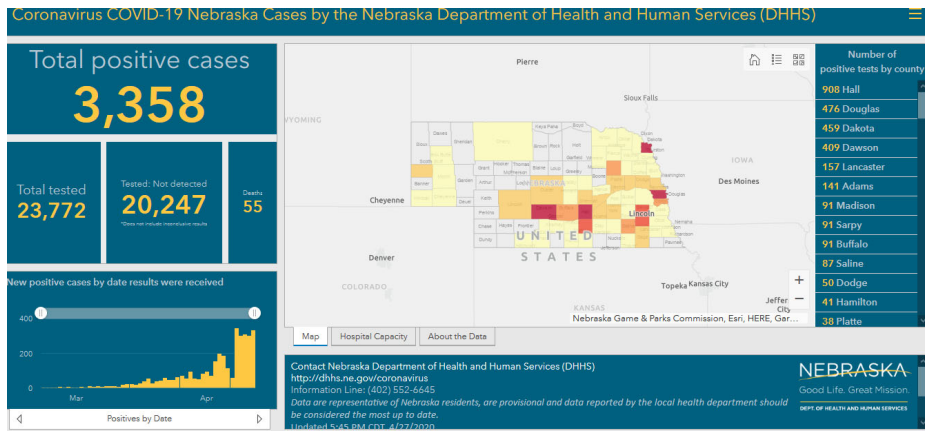


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# Your Data Nebraska



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## Your Data Minnesota

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# Confirmed

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## 3,816

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# Deaths

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## 286

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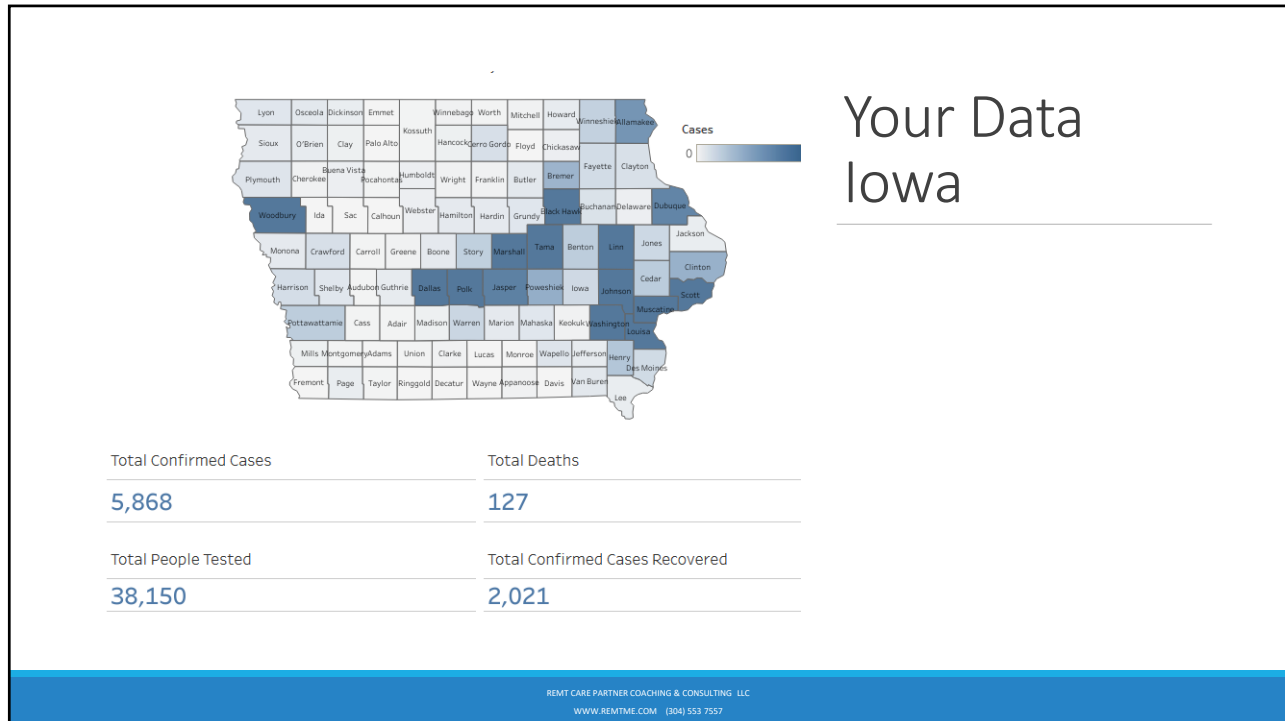
# Recovered

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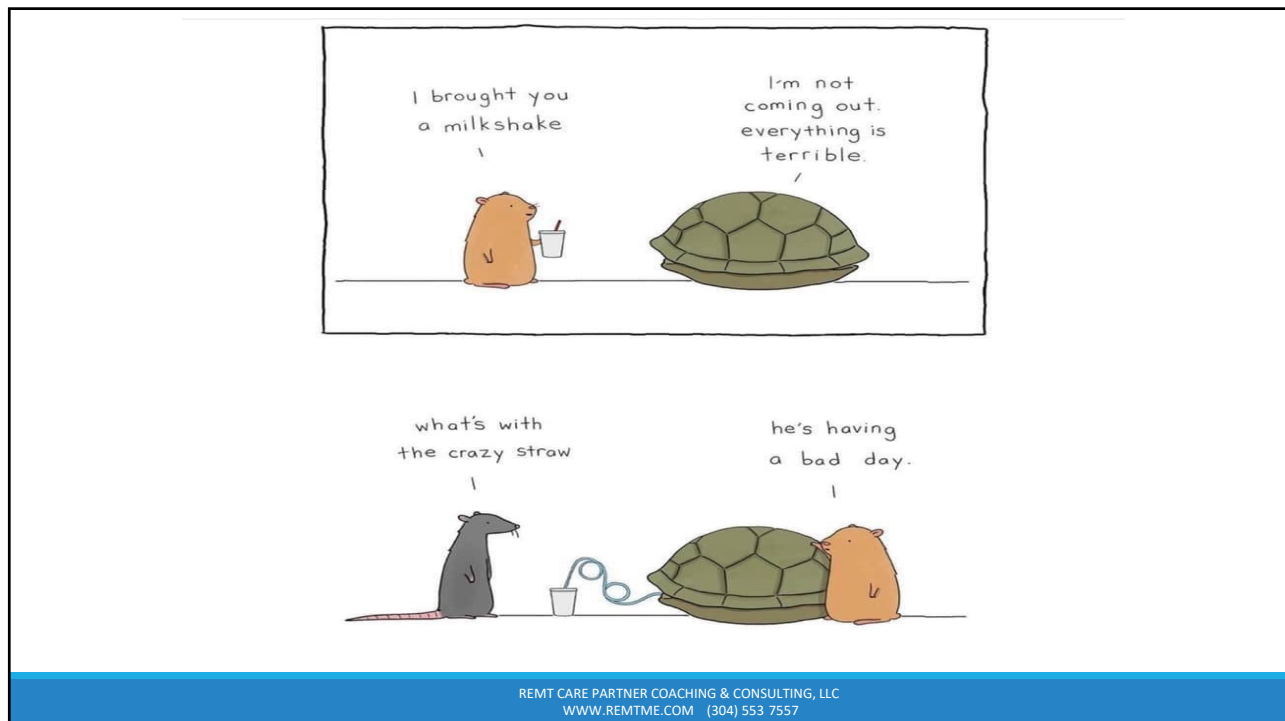
## 1,842

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Spousal caregiver A. Johnson, was able to visit her husband, who has frontotemporal dementia, on March 11 but didn't make her Saturday trip and doesn't know when she'll be able to return. "He won't let anybody clip his fingernails or shave him besides me," Johnson says. "The timing is hard because I want to be there more frequently because of the decline of the disease," she says, adding that her husband recently became incontinent. "It's really scary to have this out there when you have someone who doesn't know how to be sanitary."



Other caregivers worry because they assist staff with the care of their loved ones. Wives feed husbands, husbands make sure that their spouses do their physical therapy, and social isolation and depression can be big worries.

## Family Caregiver Concerns & Worries

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My uncle is 83. He lives alone, and he has Alzheimer's disease.



My uncle just had a heart attack and was admitted to the hospital, but I feel like he's in big trouble. One problem I can see right away is that my uncle is now denied a critical intervention: me. He depends on me.

## Family Caregiver Concerns & Worries

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<p><b>Communication is key!</b></p>	<p>Assuring them of steps that are being taken to ensure their loved one's safety.</p>	<p>Assigning staff members as primary contacts for families (e.g., the designated family caregiver or representative) to facilitate regular communications with staff by telephone, email or video.</p>	<p>Facilitating ways for family caregivers to stay in touch with their loved ones—through, for example, regular phone and “virtual visit” (e.g., Face Time, Skype, Zoom).</p>
<p>Promoting means of communication for family councils (using email, Skype, or “phone trees”) to exchange information and for family members to support one another and stay informed.</p>	<p>Sharing pictures and updates on website and social media</p>	<p>Writing letters, drawing pictures together, to send to loved ones.</p>	<p>Info email or dedicated hotline for caregiver check in? Are you willing to share cell phone for text communications?</p>







## Tips For Helping Families & Caregivers

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## Advice For family Caregivers When a Loved One is Quarantined

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<b>Make</b>	<b>Consider</b>	<b>Choose</b>	<b>Find</b>	<b>Remember</b>	<b>Be</b>
<p>Make sure you can be contacted easily: Give them the most up to date emergency contact information</p>	<p>Consider letter writing as a means of communication.</p>	<p>Choose one member of family to be the liaison., the medical “quarterback”, overseeing care for their loved one.</p>	<p>Find a good way for your family members as a group to stay on top of your loved one's life inside, possibly setting up a Facebook group or group email so the liaison can keep everyone posted.</p>	<p>Remember to care for yourself. Practice your own personal, healthy lifestyle and habits, and you'll be less vulnerable to getting sick yourself — and better able to care for someone else.</p>	<p>If you have questions about your loved ones care, you need to be assertive. Be firm, Polite and persistent. In a case where many specialists are involved, ask who the ‘quarterback’ is,</p>

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## Tips to Help a Person with Dementia



**Minimize flow of media information by turning off the 24-hour news cycle on TV.**

**When appropriate, provide information and explanation to the person with dementia who is aware and concerned.**

**Use memory aids and possibly visual cues and prompts about washing hands and reason for masks and infection control measures.**

**Take the time to listen to the person and their concerns.**

**Validate how the person is feeling and provide reassurance.**

**A person with dementia is often very intuitive. He or she will easily pick up on your anxiety or fear. Minimize display and discussion and anxiety/opinions in front of the person.**

**Maintain regular routine as much as possible and try to keep the person active to help to avoid boredom and to reduce napping time.**

**Spend time outside with the person, research shows it can help reduce aggressive behaviors.**

**Use non-pharmacological approaches First, when responding to changed or heightened behaviors.**

**Use visual prompts and cues as needed.**

**Incorporate enjoyable failure free activities.**

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## What about your worries and concerns?

**My kids are home from school alone.**

**If others can't work, I will have to work extra shifts!**

**What if I get sick? What if I bring it home??**

**Do I have the PPE I need?**

**Am I going to be furloughed?**

**I'm feeling burned out!**

**What else?**

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### Some Tips For Staying at Your Best

#### **Stay informed but be aware of information overload.**

- Learn what you need to learn, but don't get sucked into the three-hour scroll
- Consider scheduling time to check current events—perhaps twice a day—so the news doesn't overtake you.
- Check out reliable sources – lots of UNRELIABLE info on social media!!!
- Avoid negative Nancys



#### **Express your feelings!**

#### **Schedule time to worry and set boundaries.**

- Surprising but effective! Say to yourself, “I am going to worry for the next ten minutes, then move on!”

#### **Reframe thinking, and positive words.**

Instead of thinking “ This is a scary, inconvenient time”, reframe your thought to “ This time is forcing us to be more creative.”

#### **Keep a journal of this time.**

It's a milestone in the life of the world, and when this is all over (and at some point, it will be over), you may be very glad you kept a record.

•**Connect with others**– Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships and build a strong support system. Just be careful not to stay in a negative thought pattern.

- Eat healthy** –While a treat is certainly satisfying when one is stressed, avoid too much caffeine, sugar and other unhealthy foods. DRINK LOTS OF WATER!



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- Take breaks, connect with whatever inspires you**– At least take a mental break periodically. DON'T look at the news but do look at the cute cat videos.

Take a walk around the building. Fresh air makes a difference.

- **Remind yourself that this is not forever.** Try taking in deep breaths. Set goals each day.



- Practice deep breathing.** It lowers your heart rate, reduces blood pressure, releases muscle tension and tells your brain to calm down. Breath in through your nose to a count of six., breath out through your mouth for a count of six. Repeat six times.

#### **Take a moment to Acknowledge something you or your team did!**

**When you do get home make time to do a few minutes of an activity you usually enjoy or find a substitute.** If you love riding horses but cannot get out to ride, look at horse sites on FB.

Have a cup of your favorite tea, it might be a bedtime story with your children, or listening to a relaxing podcast or reading a book. Watch a funny movie or tv show - NOT the news!!!

#### **Put on Your Favorite Song and Dance!**

**Try some healthy exercise** Even in a small space you can do yoga, watch YouTube videos for cardio work-outs, use exercise apps, or one of many other resources to ease tension and reduce stress.

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## Get Adequate Rest!!!



- Create a good sleep time environment. – your own spot, put DOWN electronics, quiet – turn off the TV.
- Make sure your intentional worry time is NOT at bedtime.
- Create a routine. Just like when your children were small, you may have had a routine to prep them for sleep. Create one for yourself.
- Use that breathing thing again. OR, imagine a movie in your mind.
- Melatonin may help without leaving you groggy in the morning.

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## 5 ways to boost employee morale during a crisis

- Keep lines of communication open**
- Include employee morale in your crisis plan**
- Create a resource list for employees**
- Be flexible and empathetic**
- Give workers an emotional break**

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CARES19 phone app that helps with location tracing should a person be infected with COVID 19. Information can be found here: [https://ndresponse.gov/covid\\_19/resources/care19](https://ndresponse.gov/covid_19/resources/care19).

Black Hills Works Has delivered 300 handmade cards and letters to the staff at four Avantara health care facilities in Rapid City. With the help of Black Hills Works employees, about 40 adults with disabilities wrote and drew the messages of thanks and encouragement.

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## Helpful Organizations and Resources for Family Caregivers



[National Alliance for Caregiving](#)  
202-918-1013  
A coalition of national organizations focused on family caregiving issues. The alliance conducts policy analysis and tracks legislative and initiatives that affect caregivers and care recipients.

[National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)  
800-950-6264  
Grassroots alliance of local organizations offering information, resource referrals and peer-to-peer support for people living with mental illness, their [family members and caregivers](#).

[National Institute on Aging](#)  
800-222-2225  
An arm of the National Institutes of Health, NIA offers extensive online information on common age-related health problems, including a section on [caregiving](#) for people with serious health issues.

[Well Spouse Association](#)  
800-838-0879  
Provides support for spousal caregivers, including a national network of support groups and an online chat forum.

[Alzheimer's Association](#)  
800-272-3900  
Information and support for people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers. Operates a 24-hour helpline every day and offers care navigator tools.

[AARP Family Caregiving](#)  
877-333-5885 (888-971-2013 for Spanish)  
Along with comprehensive coverage of issues affecting caregivers, AARP offers [free care guides](#), legal checklists, information on care options and an [online community](#) that supports all types of family caregivers. You can also call our [caregiver support line](#) for one-on-one help.

[Caregiver Action Network](#)  
855-CARE-640  
Information, educational materials and support for family caregivers.

**American Diabetes Association: [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) 1-800-DIABETES (800-342-2383).**

**- Family Caregiving Alliance, National Center on Caregiving: [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org) 800.445.8106**

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## Helpful Organizations & Resources

### National Association of School Psychologists

[Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#)

A resource for parents on how best to talk to children about the coronavirus.

<https://www.nasponline.org>

### The National Child and Traumatic Stress Network

<https://www.nctsn.org>

[https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak\\_factsheet\\_1.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf)

This resource provides information for parents and caregivers about outbreaks, how they can prepare to reduce stress and anxiety, how it may affect your family both physically and emotionally and ways to cope.

[Talking with Caregivers, Parents, And Teachers during Infectious Disease Outbreaks \(PDF, 12.8MB\)](#)

Resource provides helpful information how to talk with children of different age groups.

<https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/dmhi/research-information/pandemics>

### Gretchen Rubin

<https://gretchenrubin.com/2020/03/10-tips-for-staying-calm-during-coronavirus>

Five-time *New York Times* bestselling **author**, **podcaster**, and **speaker**, creator of the **Four Tendencies framework**, exploring happiness and good habits.

<https://gretchenrubin.com>

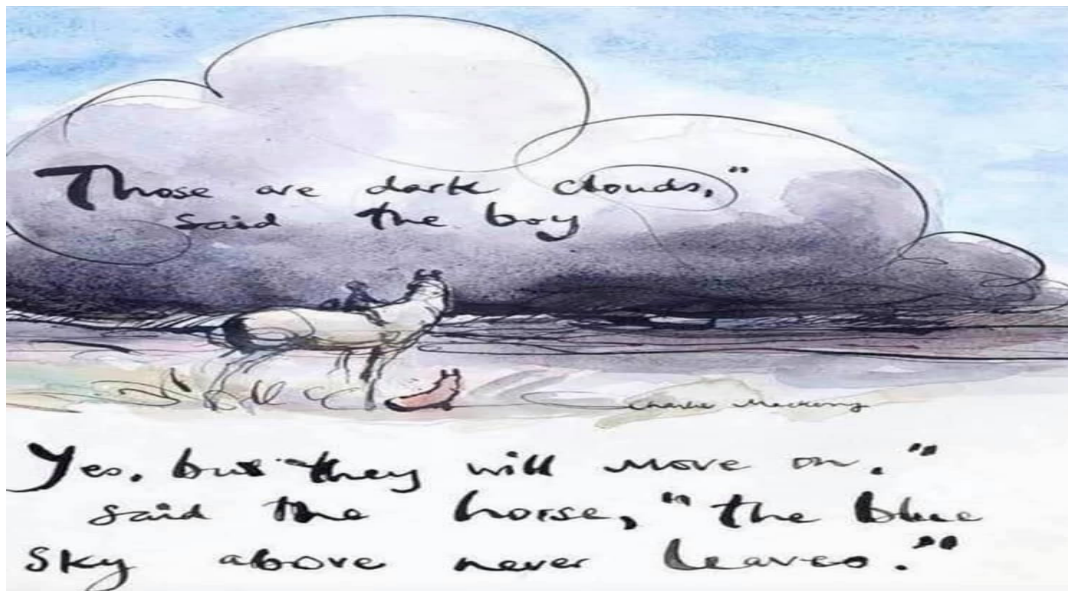
**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Hotline:** 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

People with deafness or hearing loss can use their preferred relay service to call 1-800-985-5990.

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