Please consider the following recommendations for promoting your mental wellbeing during this time.

1. Limit Media Exposure
   - Research has shown excessive media exposure to coverage of stressful events can result in negative outcomes.
   - Identify time of day to catch up on news (morning, afternoon, or evening)
   - Use trusted resources to gather information you need, then turn it off
   - American Psychological Association (APA) Five Ways to View Coverage of the Coronavirus: https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/pandemics
2. Use Trusted Resources to Stay Informed.
   - Obtain the latest information during an infectious disease outbreak from credible and reliable sources of information.
     - Center for Disease Control
     - The World Health Organization
     - The Chicago Department of Public Health
     - Columbia College Chicago Coronavirus-COVID 19 Website.
     - Mental Health America, Mental Health And COVID-19 – Information And Resources
3. Anticipate and Recognize Stress Reactions.
   - Common acute stress reactions
     - shock, things feeling surreal
     - fear or anxiety about the future or death
     - hopelessness or feeling lost about the future; feeling a lack of purpose in study or work
     - difficulty concentrating or making decisions
     - feeling emotionally detached, numb, or constant crying
     - overthinking
     - Disruptions to sleep
     - Physical discomfort without medical reason
     - Significant appetite changes
     - relying on alcohol or substances to cope with stress
     - increased irritability, feeling angry
     - shortness of breath, rapid heart rate, experiencing panic attack(s)
   - Reactions specific to COVID-19
     - Worry about contamination, preoccupation with any signs/symptoms of illness, excessively taking your own temperature, and frequent urges to have yourself examined at health centers.
     - feeling isolated or lonely, particularly due to social distancing practices
     - Feeling angry at or lacking trust in systems or others.
     - Excessive attention to or obsession with related news, information, articles, or statements.
     - Quickly jumping to conclusions based on new information, resulting in panic in self or others.

- Grieving over loss or feeling sad and/or a sense of unfairness around someone's death.
- "Survivor guilt" due to having no symptoms and little-to-no likelihood of having contracted the virus. For example, you might feel ashamed, guilty, or that you have abandoned your loved ones because you are not directly involved, because you are currently healthy, because others around you have fallen ill, or because there are limited ways you can help.
- Excessive worry about loved ones who are currently affected by the virus.
- Feeling angry, disappointed, or a lack of control because your loved ones do not follow suggested precautions or believe in false information.

4. Try Different Strategies to Cope and Reduce Stress
   - Be prepared (e.g., develop a personal/ family plan for the outbreak) and educate yourself about preventive measures: from hand-washing technique and cough etiquette, to more complex medical recommendations for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.
   - Talk about it. It's important not to hold in your emotions. Talk to a friend, family member, or a counselor. Ask for support from people who care about you and who will listen to your concerns.
   - Receiving support and care can be comforting and reassuring. Communicate in whatever way feels comfortable to you; even keeping a diary. Connect with friends and family in novel ways if you're isolated. Connect with those you feel closest to for support.
   - Engage in enjoyable activities (listening to music, exercising, breathing routines, spending time in nature, playing with animals, journaling, or reading inspirational texts)
     - [Netflix](#) Party: A Chrome extension that lets you watch Netflix with others remotely
     - [Houseparty](#): An app to video chat with groups of people and play games together virtually
     - [Colorfy](#): Coloring and Relaxation App
     - [NASA](#): At home STEM activities, solve citizen science challenges, read ebooks, listen to space podcasts, apply to be an astronaut
     - [YMCA360](#): free online classes
     - [Massimo](#) Bottura Cooking Classes:Free Instagram cooking classes by Massimo Bottura
     - [Broadway](#) HD:Watch Broadway plays and musicals online with a 7 day free trial
     - [The Metropolitan Opera](#): Watch the opera performances via livestream
     - [Audile Stories](#): Free streaming stories for all ages
     - [Free Things to Do In Chicago:](#) Not just Chicago free virtual events and activities
     - [Free museum tours](#):Experience the best museums from London to Seoul in the comfort of your own home
     - [Cincinatti](#) Zoo: Digital Safaris
     - [Monterey Bay Aquarium:](#) Watch live streams of many animals, including otters, jellyfish, penguins, and sharks

5. Engage in healthy behaviors to enhance your ability to cope with excessive stress.

- Eat well balanced meals, get plenty of rest, and build physical activity into your day.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs; they can suppress your feelings rather than help you manage and lessen your distress.
- Eat regularly and keep up with an exercise routine.
- If you are having trouble sleeping, try some relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga.
  - Downdog App: Paid app
  - Fiton App: Free fitness app
  - Ten Percent Happier Coronavirus Sanity Guide
  - Headspace Covid-19 support: mindfulness and relaxation app
  - Happify: Mental Health App
  - Sanvello: Mindfulness and relaxation app
  - CorePower Yoga: Online yoga fitness classes

6. Participate in an online support group or therapy
   - Talking to peers can be very beneficial for our mental health
     - 7 Cups
     - Emotions Anonymous
     - Support Group Central
     - TheTribe Wellness Community
     - Support Groups
     - For Like Minds
     - 18percent
     - Psych Central
     - Overeater's Anonymous

7. Helping others, even during your own time of distress, can give you a sense of control and can make you feel better about yourself.
   - Locate resources in your community or ways that you can help other or do something productive. Helping someone else often has the benefit of making you feel better.
   - The Greater Chicago Food Depository

8. Stick to a structure and strive for balance
   - If possible, stick to your usual daily routine
   - Remind yourself of people and events which are meaningful and comforting, even encouraging.
   - Striving for balance empowers you and allows for a healthier perspective on yourself and the world around you.
   - People who already are managing existing mental health conditions should prioritize self-care during difficult times and should contact their clinicians if they have questions or concerns.

9. Here are some additional links with more guidance on caring for your mental health:
   - Jed Foundation
   - NAMI.org

10. Further Reading
    - CDC Taking Care of Your Emotional Health
    - COVID-19: Managing Stress in This Anxious Time