COPING WITH STRESS, ANXIETY, AND SUBSTANCE USE DURING COVID-19: HOW ANIMALS CAN HELP

The COVID-19 pandemic has created disruptions in our lives that can cause feelings of stress and anxiety. These feelings are normal.

Did you know:
The connection between humans and animals can be important in reducing stress and anxiety.

Stress and anxiety may cause you to experience:
- Fear or constant worry
- Anger or being easily irritated
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Struggling to make decisions
- Consuming more alcohol, cannabis or other substances than usual

In the Life in Recovery from Addiction in Canada survey led by CCSA, 88% of Canadians identified their relationship with animals or pets as an important support in their recovery from addiction.

Activities you can do with your pet to cope
Don’t have a pet? Connect with therapy dogs online at therapydogs.ca to PAWS your stress.

- Stay active and keep busy. Watch therapy dog Mia and handler Dan play hide and seek.
- Stay connected with friends and family. Watch therapy dog Anna-Belle and handler Colleen connect to learn new dance moves.
- Take a break. See how therapy dog Zaphod takes a break to relax.
- Put structure in your day. Watch therapy dog Almond go for regular bike rides.
- Take care of your body. Check out what therapy dogs Blizzard and S’more eat to keep healthy.

If you use substances

1. Monitor your use of substances: pay attention to the frequency and context of your use.
2. Follow Canada’s Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines.
3. Follow Canada’s Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines.
4. Avoid stockpiling alcohol, cannabis and other substances.
5. Reach out for help if you feel your substance use is becoming a problem.

REACH OUT FOR HELP
Talk to a family member, friend or seek professional support, if needed. For additional resources and support visit Wellness Together Canada.

For more information visit, ccsa.ca/Impacts or www.mentalhealthcommission.ca