



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF
WHILE STAYING HOME
BECAUSE YOU DON'T FEEL
SAFE

Taking Care of Yourself While Staying Home Because You Don't Feel Safe

Many immigrants, non-citizens, and people of color in the United States are currently limiting their movements because they are worried about detention or deportation. Staying home out of fear is exhausting. It can shrink your world, increase stress, and make each day feel heavy or uncertain.

If you are feeling anxious, tense, or constantly on alert, your reactions make sense. Your body is trying to protect you.

This resource offers practical ways to maintain wellbeing when isolating or staying at home for prolonged periods of time. It is not legal guidance.

Common Reactions When You're Afraid to Leave Home

You may notice:

- Anxiety, tension, or feeling “on edge”
- Trouble sleeping or waking frequently
- Racing thoughts or difficulty concentrating
- Irritability or emotional ups and downs
- Restlessness, boredom, or losing track of time
- Urges to constantly check news or social media
- Increased use of alcohol, food, or screens to cope

These reactions are common. They do not mean you are weak. They mean your nervous system is under strain.

When You're Isolated and Everything Feels Uncertain, Start With Three Priorities

1. Support Your Body First

Stress lives in the body. Caring for your physical needs strengthens your ability to cope. Small steps that help:

- Drink water regularly.
- Eat small meals or snacks, even if appetite is low.
- Rest when you can. Short periods of rest still count.

You do not need perfection. Consistency matters more than intensity.

2. Help Your Body Come Down From High Alert

Fear keeps your nervous system activated. Intentionally calming your body reduces anxiety. These things all help:

- **Move your body daily** – stretch, walk indoors, follow a short workout, dance to one song.
- **Slow, controlled breathing**
- **Things that help your perspective feel “anchored”** – prayer, scripture, mantras, gratitude, nature (even if it’s just sitting by a window).
- **Express it** – journaling, notes, voice memos, talking to others – “getting it out” can reduce pressure and clear the mind.
- **News/social media boundaries** – limit exposure; stick to a small number of trusted sources; avoid doomscrolling.

Try this simple breathing reset	Create 1–3 Daily “Reset Moments”	Set Gentle Limits on News & Social Media
<p><i>Inhale for 3 seconds</i> <i>Hold for 3 seconds</i> <i>Exhale for 3 seconds</i> <i>Repeat 5 times</i></p> <p>Quietly say a word like “calm” or “steady” as you exhale.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If safe, sit near sunlight or a window. • Wash your face or hands with warm water. • Stretch your shoulders and neck. • Listen to one favorite song. • Make tea or coffee and drink it slowly. <p>Even 60 seconds of intentional calming interrupts the stress cycle.</p>	<p>Constant exposure keeps your body in alert mode.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose 1–2 trusted sources. • Check at scheduled times. • Avoid scrolling before bed. <p>You deserve mental breaks</p>

3. Protect Connection and Belonging

Isolation increases stress. Even small connection helps.

- Be proactive about reaching out (especially if living alone): call, voice notes, video, text.
- Reach out regularly to trusted connections.
- If you live alone, plan at least one daily interaction.
- If you live with others, balance quiet time and shared time -- plan time apart and create mini-boundaries in the home.
- Share meals, stories, music, prayer, or simple routines.

Connection can be private and low-risk—one trusted person is enough.

Create Structure When the Outside World Feels Unpredictable

Routine restores a sense of control, and feeling in-control reduces stress and improves wellbeing. Try:

- Wake and sleep at roughly consistent times.
- Get dressed, even if staying home.
- Create a daily routine and a to-do list that includes:
 - One necessary task
 - One thing that makes you feel capable
 - One thing that brings comfort or enjoyment

Rest is not laziness, it is recovery.

Healthy Coping vs Coping That Makes Things Worse

Healthy self-care strategies tend to

- Increase your sense of calm and/or self-respect
- Strengthen your body
- Support connection
- Help you feel capable

Unhealthy coping often:

- Increases your sense of numbness/detachment
- Helps you feel good in the moment but makes problems worse over time

Under prolonged stress, many people turn to numbing strategies (excessive screen time, alcohol, overeating, withdrawal). If you notice you're leaning on numbing strategies, it's understandable—stress does that. However, numbing strategies can quietly become habits that increase anxiety, disrupt sleep, and sometimes lead to dependence.

If you can, begin slowly replacing them with small, healthier coping habits that support your body, relationships, and long-term wellbeing.

Start with small shifts. Progress, not perfection.

If You Are Caring for Children

- Keep routines simple and predictable.
- Reassure without making promises you cannot control.
- Name emotions in simple language (“It’s okay to feel worried.”).
- Create short “quiet times” in your daily routines.
- Do some shared activities that are “low effort” for you (e.g., listening to audio books together)

Your calm presence matters more than perfect answers.

When to Seek Extra Support

Consider reaching out to a trusted healthcare provider, counselor, faith leader, community organization, or support line if:

- Anxiety or panic feels unmanageable
- Sleep is severely disrupted
- You feel hopeless or emotionally numb most days
- Substance use is increasing
- You are struggling to function or care for your family

Seeking support is a sign of strength.

A Final Word

You do not need to do all of this.

Choose one small action today that increases calm, stability, or connection.

Small daily steps still strengthen resilience and support wellbeing – even in uncertain times.

ABOUT KON TERRA

At KonTerra, we specialize in supporting clients that operate in complex and high-stress environments where organizations and their staff face difficult challenges.

When staff work in high-pressure roles or locations with elevated exposure to threat, suffering, graphic content, or conflict, they are at risk of experiencing overload, attrition, and stress reactions such as burnout. The KonTerra Group works directly with individuals, leaders, and teams to equip them with tools to better understand and manage the challenges they face.

Providing support in a meaningful way is only possible with the right people. The experience and sensitivity of our counselors, trainers, and coaches allows us to work with clients in a way that is unique. Our specialists all share two attributes which equip them to deliver excellent support: all are veteran mental health clinicians (master's or doctoral-level); and experienced supporting staff in high-stress and high-stakes environments and roles.



Services delivered by our uniquely positioned professionals include:

- Individual Counseling and Coaching
- Virtual and Onsite Training and Educational Events
- Staff Wellbeing Assessments
- Manager Support and Consultations for Organizations and Leaders
- Critical Incident Response Services

If you are interested in learning more about any of the above services, please contact your KonTerra Account Manager or email: info@konterragroup.net.