



Los Angeles County  
Office of Education

Employee Assistance  
Service for Education



# CONNECT WITH EASE

Employee Assistance Service for Education

## Monthly Article

*Stress During a Pandemic*

*Pop Culture Corner*

**EASE CAN HELP DURING DIFFICULT TIMES**

**CONNECT WITH EASE:**

**(800) 882-1341**

**Free confidential professional help for all district employees:**

- Family troubles
- Emotional distress
- Job stress
- Anxiety
- Substance use
- Grief and Loss
- Life transition issues

Professional counselors are ready to help.

Call the EASE Hotline for 24/7 assistance

## MESSAGE FROM EASE

This month, we bring to you a focus and awareness on how you're feeling. With the recent surge in Covid cases, many have either been sick, or have cared for loved ones. We also know that we have lost beloved staff members during this time, and family members. It is important to remember that there can be lingering effects for months and recovery can be and feel difficult. How we physically feel has a direct connection to our mental health, particularly over long periods of time. This month we honor Black History Month and the month of love, Valentine's Day. Spreading mental health awareness and removing stigma in the black community is important for accessibility to care. With this, we elevate the focus on self love, compassion for self and others, and the knowledge that our minds and bodies are interconnected. We raise awareness around the importance of black mental health and work towards dispelling stigma and stereotypes. Getting access and feeling safe are key to mental health. If you, a colleague, or loved one is struggling, EASE is available for support. It is safe, easy, and accessible. Wishing you all health and love.

# STRESS DURING A PANDEMIC

BY: EASE STAFF

We are in the second month of 2022, and this year has already felt like a whirlwind! If you feel more tired than usual, the lingering effects of COVID-19 or compounded stress may be the cause.

As we continue to live through this pandemic, many have been experiencing rising stress levels. We see this with students, staff, and families. Exposure to long-term stress can result in fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, or frustration. Physical changes are apparent: changes in appetite, energy, interests, and difficulty concentrating. It also affects our sleeping patterns and can even cause nightmares. Many people may experience headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and worsening of chronic health problems.

Many have endured COVID-19 infections over the past few months. Although the recent variant infections are reportedly less severe, it is essential to take it easy when recovering. Some of the symptoms of COVID-19 may be present as longer-term lingering effects. Common symptoms that linger over time include fatigue, shortness of breath, cough, chest pain, memory problems, sleep issues, loss of smell or taste, depression, and/or anxiety. We must also remember that experiences of grief and loss will also linger.

Things you can do to take it slow as we *EASE* back into our daily routines and work:

- Take breaks! Schedule them in your calendars.
- Set boundaries around time and energy.
- Meditate or participate in a mindful activity.
- Take a walk during your lunch.
- Call a supportive friend or family member.
- Call the EASE 24/7 Hotline if you want to talk to a counselor.



## POP CULTURE CORNER

RECOMMENDATIONS BY EASE STAFF  
(CLICK ON THE TEXT BELOW TO ACCESS THE LINKS)

### [Liberate Meditation App](#)

A safe space for the Black community that focuses on developing a daily meditation habit.

### [Tiny Leaps, Big Changes Podcast](#)

A personal development podcast, hosted by Gregg Clunis, focused on exploring the day-to-day behaviors we all engage in that determine the results we gain in our lives.

*Recommended Episode: #784 Recovering from the Pandemic*

### [Therapy for Black Girls: The Podcast](#)

A weekly conversation with Dr. Joy Harden Bradford, about all things mental health, personal development, and all the small decisions we can make to become the best possible version of ourselves.

*Recommended Episode: Session 229, 10 More Ways to Optimize Your Mental Health*

### [Book: How We Show Up](#)

By: Mia Birdsong

Through research, interviews, and stories of lived experience, the book "How We Show Up" returns us to our inherent connectedness where we find strength, safety, and support in vulnerability and generosity, in asking for help, and in being accountable. Showing up--literally and figuratively--points us toward the promise of our collective vitality and leads us to the liberated well-being we all want.

## TALK TO US

EASE has counselors if you want to talk.