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Resources are available to help North Dakotans transition to a new normal

BISMARCK, N.D. – Resuming a normal lifestyle safely as the COVID-19 daily positivity rate remains low and vaccination efforts grow is on the minds of many North Dakotans. The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division has resources, supports and services available to help people who may be experiencing stress, anxiety and other emotions during this transition.

"As we mark the one-year anniversary of the pandemic's arrival in North Dakota, people are adjusting once again to a new normal. Although we may enjoy the thought of resuming pre-COVID activities, for many it may bring stress, anxiety or questions about how to transition back into activities," said Pamela Sagness, the department's Behavioral Health Division director.

Here are some tips to ease the transition to a new normal and new routine.

- Start small with enjoyable activities: Have one friend over for coffee, go out for breakfast, eat outside on a patio or run errands on a weekday to avoid large crowds.
- Slowly expand your world.
- Enjoy the outdoors: Have a picnic at a park, go for a walk with a friend around a neighborhood or try activities like golfing or fishing.
- Visit a local shop during off peak hours.
- Follow public health guidance: Learn about vaccination opportunities and continue masking, avoiding large crowds, washing your hands frequently and staying home if you feel sick.
- Trust your instincts: Take extra time becoming comfortable, use caution and be patient.

The [Behavioral Health Division's website](#) has resources for educators, health care and behavioral health professionals, parents and other North Dakotans. There is information about free virtual support groups, how to locate addiction or mental health treatment services and other resources.

Other available supports include [Project Renew](#), which offers free and anonymous counseling from trained professionals. People can call Project Renew at 701-223-1510. If someone is having thoughts of suicide or is concerned about a loved one, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24-hours a day, seven days a week by calling 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

The Behavioral Health Division is responsible for reviewing and identifying service needs and activities in the state's behavioral health system to ensure health and safety and access to quality services. It also establishes quality assurance standards for the licensure of substance use disorder program services and facilities and provides policy leadership in partnership with public and private entities. For more information, visit www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov.

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