



Mental health and coping during COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives in many ways. From physical to mental wellness, it is important to notice what is affecting us and address them appropriately. While the



physical precautions we take to prevent the spread of COVID-19 may be more obvious, we may not notice how much emotional stress that it can cause. For example, social distancing can make us feel isolated, lonely, or even depressed.

What are some signs of overwhelming stress?

Feelings of uncontrollable emotions, changes in appetite and/or energy, difficulty in concentration, insomnia, new/worsening of pre-existing physical/mental health problems.

How can we cope? It is normal to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Acknowledge those feelings. Everyone copes differently. Give yourself time and make sustainable goals for yourself. For example, if you're feeling overwhelmed, connect with others and talk to someone you trust. When you want to travel, try searching for recipes from that region to have a taste of it at your own home. If you're having financial issues and/or overwhelming emotions, consider consulting a professional for your worries. There are many resources available at the City Hall and we will try our best to assist you.

Take care of yourself and remember you are not alone.

What is Golden Week?



Here are the holidays making up Golden Week in 2021:

April 29: Showa Day
May 3: Constitution Day

May 4: Greenery Day
May 5: Children's Day

Did you know?

April 29 is Showa Day, a holiday that honors the birthday of the late Emperor Showa. **May 3** is Constitution Memorial Day and marks the establishment of the nation's constitution in 1947. **May 4** is Greenery Day as the emperor loved nature and the environment. Greenery Day did not have a name until 2006 and used to be celebrated on April 29. **May 5** is Children's Day (Boy's Day) when families hang carp streamers to symbolize strength, power, and success in life. Carps are a symbol of determination and resilience. Similarly, Girl's Day is celebrated on March 3 (although it is not a public holiday).

Why is it called "Golden Week"?

Following Japan's 1947 Constitution, film studio Daiei saw record ticket sales in 1951 at the new collection of national holidays during that time. Borrowing from the *waseigo* (Japanese English) for radio prime time ("*Golden Time*"), Daiei Managing Director Hideo Matsuyama dubbed this lucrative time of year "Golden Week."

Wisteria Flowers ふじ 藤



Japan is perhaps most well-known for cherry blossoms but many people visit to see the wisteria in bloom as well. One of the most famous places to see them is Ashikaga Flower Park in Tochigi but did you know you can also see them in Gunma for free? You can see them at *Fuji no Saku Oka* in Fujioka. In spring, this 23,000-square-meter flower park is filled with wisteria, or "fuji" in Japanese. There is a 250-meter-long trellised tunnel of its namesake flower as well as a garden that exhibits about 45 varieties of the flower. During blooming season, from

late April to mid-May, the long trellis is beautifully illuminated at night. We recommend going by bus or taxi as it is a long walk from the nearest station (Gunma-Fujioka Station). While it is possible to get there by bus; service is infrequent.

Shibazakura しばざくら 芝桜



While they look similar, shibazakura are not cherry blossoms, but a variety of flowers known as moss phlox. While widely cultivated in Japan, it is a plant native to the central and eastern USA. One of the closest and most famous places to see them is in Yamanashi Prefecture. The Fuji Shibazakura Festival is held in the Fuji Five Lakes area and is closest to Lake Motosuko. Depending on the weather, the blooming of the flowers can coincide with Golden Week. However, did you know that you can also see them in Gunma? You can see them in Takasaki at Misato Shibazakura Park. The admission fee is ¥310 for adults and ¥100 for elementary students. All

events are canceled this year due to COVID-19, but you can still enjoy walking through the beautiful gardens.