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AUGUST 2020

RUTZEN EYE SPECIALISTS & LASER CENTER Page 8

Doctors Allan Rutzen and Jacey Hanna are using telehealth systems and social distancing policies to serve patients while keeping them safe.



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SERVING OUR COMMUNITY SINCE 1981

E-LEARNING Page 3

Families can embed speech and language skills seamlessly into their curriculum and routines.

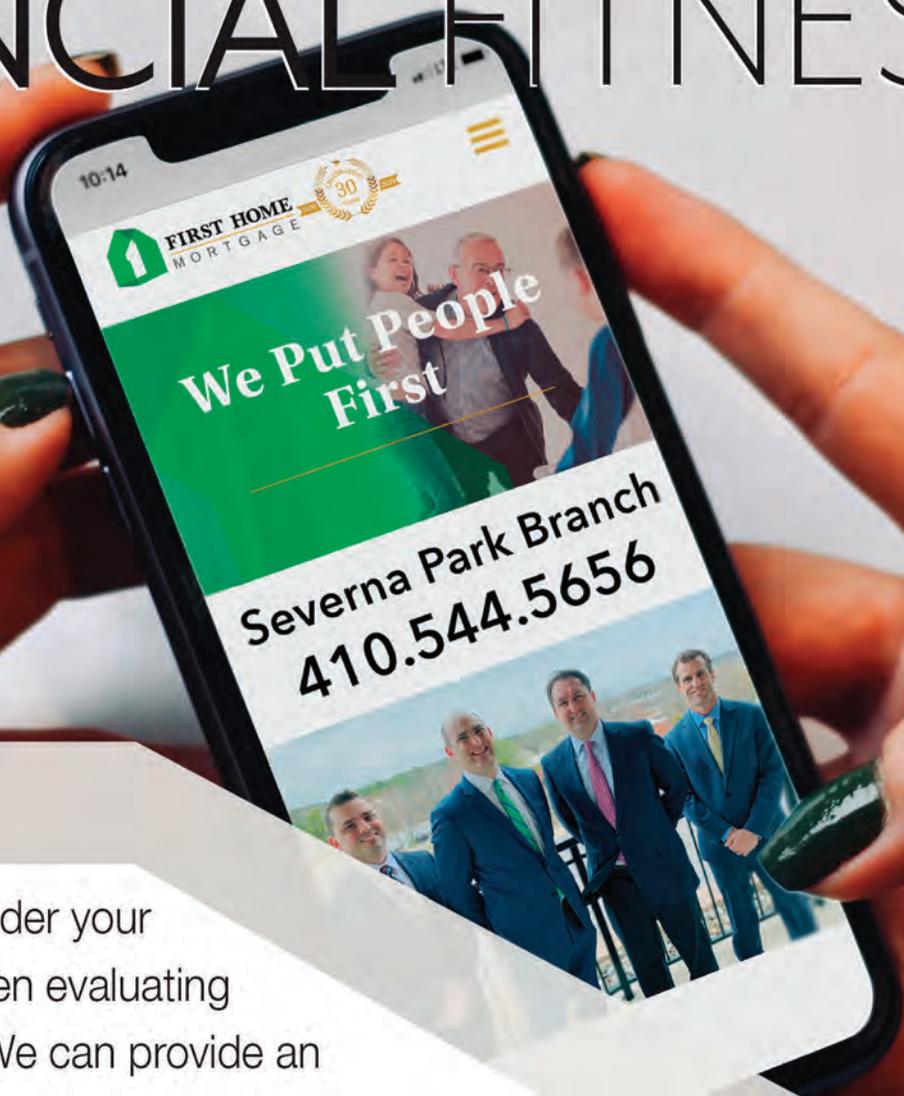
MIND HEALTH Page 4

A new text-based mental health initiative fights isolation and encourages mental wellness.

COVID FACTS Page 15

Learn ways to support yourself and others during social distancing or quarantine.

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Supporting Speech/Language Development During Home-Based E-Learning

By Morgan Schmincke

M.S., CCC-SLP

Budding Voices

As many families embark on the unknown by schooling their children this fall, it can be especially overwhelming for parents of children with communication delays or disorders. By thinking creatively, families can embed speech and language skills seamlessly into their curriculum and routines.

There are many strategies you can implement in the home for children even as young as 12 months:

- Toy rotations allow your little one to explore a limited selection of toys for an extended period of time. Plus, it limits clutter!

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Maryland Department Of Health Launches MD Mind Health

*Texting Initiative Aims To Reach Young People,
Rural Communities And General Public*

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) has launched MD Mind Health, a new text-based mental health initiative to fight isolation and encourage mental wellness. The new program was developed by the MDH Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) in partnership with Maryland 211, the state's crisis hotline.

"Staying connected with family, friends and other support systems is more challenging, and more important than ever," said MDH Secretary Robert Neall. "In difficult times, it can make a difference to know you're not alone."

Maryland's crisis hotline saw a significant increase in volume in recent months, especially in text messages. From March 2019 to March 2020, text messages increased by 842 percent; "chats" increased almost 84 percent; and calls increased almost 25 percent. Between February 2020 (1,619 calls) and March 2020 (2,345 calls), calls to Maryland 211 increased by 45 percent.

The MD Mind Health program is an extension of mental outreach provided by BHA during the pandemic. Texts sent through the program will not only provide supportive mental health messages, but also will remind recipients that immediate access to mental health services is available. If in distress, individuals can call 211, chat through the 211 website, or text 898-211. All actions will link the individual to a call specialist available 24/7.



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Ruthford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary

More than half of Americans — 56 percent — surveyed by the Kaiser Family Foundation in late April, reported that the coronavirus outbreak has caused them to experience at least one negative effect on their mental health, such as problems with sleeping or eating, increased alcohol use, or worsening chronic conditions. Even before COVID-19, anxiety ranked as one of the most common mental health disorders globally.

Text 898-211 to sign up for MD Mind Health to receive encouragement, reminders and resources for staying connected. Messages include tips about self-compassion and self-care, suggested actions, recommended podcasts and apps, inspirational quotes and

information on how to find community resources and get help if needed.

"Physical distancing has left many feeling more alone and isolated, and these feelings can fuel sadness, depression, cravings for substances and relapse, negative coping skills, thoughts of suicide and other mental health problems," said Dr. Aliya Jones, deputy secretary for BHA. "We must find healthy ways to respond. Even though we may not be seeing as much of each other, we don't have to feel alone. This texting initiative is another way to combat that."

Text messaging is a low-cost intervention that can reach individuals across the state, especially in rural

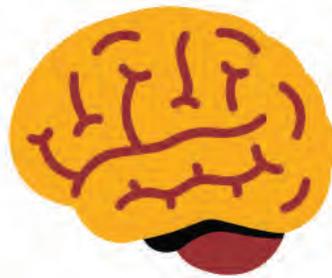
areas with limited access to some services. Texting may be the best way to connect with teens and young adults, as surveys have indicated it is a preferred way to communicate.

MD Mind Health uses the Prevention Pays Platform, which is based on Caring Contacts, an evidenced-based suicide prevention program. Caring Contacts supplements standard care by promoting human connectedness through caring messages.

MD Mind Health is the latest in a growing list of new and established resources BHA is providing and promoting to support behavioral health in the time of COVID-19. Resources developed for the public also include a Recovery and Wellness Resource guide, a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communication guide, PSAs on anxiety and depression, and an extensive list of webinars, support groups, and info guides for clinicians and the general public.

People in crisis can get immediate help by calling Maryland's crisis hotline (211, press 1), the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK), or SAMHSA's national emergency number (1-800-273-8255). Maryland veterans can also enroll in Operation Roll Call (1-877-770-4801) — a program that offers regular check-in calls and a chance to talk to someone who can offer support.

Information and resources regarding COVID-19 are available at www.coronavirus.maryland.gov. ■



MD Mind Health

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Resilience, Strength And Emergence Through The Phases Of The Pandemic



Chesapeake Life Center

Casey Dressel

Roberta Rook

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, life has gone on, albeit in a very different sense from which we are accustomed. Graduation celebrations happened without crowds, babies were born without the customary visits of excited family and friends. Loved ones died with obituaries that could not include the phrase “died surrounded by family.”

Grieving during a pandemic may have left you feeling like your personal grief was paused or even overshadowed by the collective community’s loss due to COVID-19. Now, as we are slowly emerging into the world “out there,” there are those among us ready to embrace this new world while others feel more cautious and unsure. Just

Continued on page 10

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Caring For Life

When The Caregiver Needs Care

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Once your loved ones reach a certain age, it usually becomes necessary for a family member to become a caregiver. We are likely to become their companion, nurse, chauffeur and maid, and we oversee, or participate fully in, “giving care.” Let’s take a look today at some of the pitfalls of “caregiver burnout,” a genuine problem in today’s society.

Conflicting Demands Of The Caregiver

Life can be challenging at times. As your senior family member ages, they may be-

come more dependent on you for care. Or an event may occur that forces you to become the caregiver to an aging parent or relative quite suddenly.

These scenarios don’t always happen when you’re free from other commitments. Many people find themselves in this situation when they are still raising their children or helping to care for their grandchildren. A caregiver may be trying to maintain a job outside the home. You might be active in groups and organizations.

Issues The Caregiver Faces

The problem lies in caregivers doing too much and putting on a brave face, denying that they are under a great deal of stress, while it begins to take a toll on their physical and mental health. Some of the issues they face include:

- Lack of skilled training to

handle medical conditions, including dementia

- The financial burden of caring for a loved one – lack of money and resources
- Trying to be all things to all people, and neglecting their needs in the process
- The caregiver has to deal with unreasonable expectations of them, either from the family, or their loved one
- High expectations that the care you provide will improve the situation

Signs Of Caregiver Burnout

A burned-out caregiver will feel overwhelmed, exhausted, depressed and unable to cope with the situation. The emotional stress that they feel will soon become a danger to their physical health. The chronic stress compounds the situation, as the caregiver is more likely to

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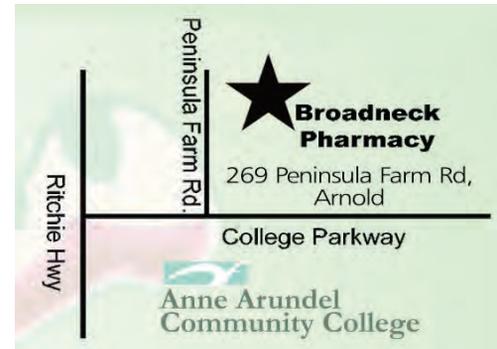




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Rutzen Eye Specialists & Laser Center Finds



“We have experimented with different systems and we’ve come across some that are easy, that anyone can do. Some patients are nervous, but then they are just delighted that they have this chance to meet with us that way.”

— **DR. ALLAN RUTZEN**



By Zach Sparks

With telehealth visits and in-office safety precautions, Rutzen Eye Specialists & Laser Center is going the extra mile to put patients at ease during the coronavirus pandemic.

“Telehealth really increased after the pandemic started and we had the stay-at-home order,” said Dr. Allan Rutzen. “We have a lot of experience with telehealth systems, and some other medical offices have looked to us as a model.”

Rutzen and Dr. Jacey Hanna are using FaceTime, Zoom, Doxy and other platforms to communicate with patients. The doctors tried several apps in search of ones that are user-friendly.

“We have experimented with different systems and we’ve come across some that are easy, that anyone can do,” Rutzen said. “Some patients are nervous, but then they are just delighted that they have this chance to meet with us that way.”

“FaceTime is as easy as answering your phone — there is no need to download an app if you have an iPhone, iPad, or Mac computer,” he added.

Rutzen and his team are still providing the same personalized service during both virtual exams and in-person visits. The staff is following protocols outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

When someone needs an appointment, the staff first gets information about the problem by phone. The waiting area is closed, so patients may wait a few minutes in their car once they arrive, but Rutzen emphasized that wait times are brief. Once the doctor is ready, the patient will get a call and then will be brought directly to a room for their exam.

“We used to have a lot of patients in the reception area and patients whose pupils were dilating, and magazines, food and candy,” Rutzen said. “Now we bring patients straight in, they walk to an exam room, they get seen promptly and they get discharged promptly, but we don’t rush anybody. We still have the same personal, customized service that we have always had, but we just don’t have a process where we have waiting anymore. It’s much more abbreviated.”

New Ways To Serve Patients



Only two or three patients are in the office at a given time. Commercial-grade air purifiers have been placed in every room to filter the air, a measure not necessarily required by CDC guidelines, but “air purifiers are an added safety measure for our patients and staff,” Rutzen said.

Patients with emergencies are seen the same day. Other problems are addressed quickly, depending on the patients’ needs.

When it comes to telehealth, it is hard to do a complete eye exam, Rutzen said, but he can take care of a wide variety of eye problems this way.

“When we use telehealth, the video resolution is very good, and we can see more than patients might think,” Rutzen said. “For example, we can examine the eyelid for signs of an infection. We can see things like redness, tearing and swelling. We can look at the iris and pupil to see how that reacts to the light.”

There are some conditions that require a face-to-face office visit, such as cataracts or diabetic retinopathy. “Dr. Hanna and I can still see more with a microscope, and it’s good to see patients face to face for these types of eye problems.”

While it is anyone’s guess when life will get back to a more normal routine, Rutzen is glad that his staff has found a way to help patients with their eye care while keeping their overall health a priority.

“My staff and I feel very glad we can still offer a full range of health care options,” Rutzen said. “We do see patients for emergencies and surgery. We really enjoy being able to still offer our services. It’s very gratifying.”

Rutzen Eye Specialists & Laser Center is located at 489 Ritchie Highway, Suite 200, in Severna Park. To make an appointment, call 410-975-0090, or learn more at www.rutzeneye.com. ■



RUTZEN
EYE SPECIALISTS
& LASER CENTER

Resilience, Strength And Emergence Through The Phases Of The Pandemic

Continued from page 5

like grief is a different experience for each person and changes over time, re-entry and resiliency does, too. Here are a few descriptive words to consider:

- **Emergence:** The process of coming into view or becoming exposed after being concealed.
- **Resilience:** The ability to withstand hardship and remain psychologically healthy.
- **Loss:** Occurs any time life is different than we expect it to be. Grief is a type of loss related to death.

As both individuals and the community at large, we are constantly having to adjust to the massive change in how life is now lived on a daily basis. As you step into the next turn, con-

sider what helps, what hurts, and how you will define your path's strength and resilience. Reflect on the following questions either in a journal or out loud with a friend.

- **What does strength mean and look like to you? In big or small ways?**
- **We talk about phases for resuming activities in our regions during this pandemic. Think about your grief, and where you are in your personal emergence into your own life changed by loss. What does your personal phase or plan look like?**
- **Try to imagine what your resilience and strength look or feel like to you. One way to help you visualize this is**

by looking through a magazine or online for a picture or two that remind you of qualities you have, qualities that have helped you cope with loss and change. These are qualities you have relied on through past difficulties, even if you do not necessarily know whether they will help you through the loss you are facing now. Here are some examples:

- Being extroverted
- Being open to new experiences
- Having confidence in my own ability to cope with situations
- Finding meaning in or through what happens to me
- Being motivated to solve the problems that occur in my life
- Being optimistic
- Appreciating challenges in life
- Having good social supports/

people to talk to

- Having faith/being spiritual
- Having a sense of humor
- Having a sense of hope
- Being open to how others feel
- Being active in structuring life and making plans

Keep this picture posted along with the qualities that you see as your strengths and resilience in a place where you can view it daily. It is resilience, the true strength, which will enable you to cope with it all.

Casey Dressel, LCSW-C, is a bereavement counselor and Roberta Rook, MA, LCPC, is the bereavement program coordinator for Chesapeake Life Center at Hospice of the Chesapeake. For details, visit www.chesapeake-lifecenter.org or call 1-888-501-7077. ■

CORONAVIRUS COVID-19

PREVENTION

Practice Social Distancing

Work from home if possible. Maintain a 6-foot distance from other people and avoid crowded places.



Keep Your Hands Clean

Stop the spread of germs by washing your hands often. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.



Cover Your Mouth and Nose



When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve, rather than your hands. Try to avoid touching your face.

Wear a Cloth Face Mask

Protect yourself and others in public with a cloth face mask, particularly when social distancing is not possible.



Clean and Disinfect

Use a virus-killing disinfectant to clean frequently used household surfaces such as doorknobs and countertops.



Maintain Healthy Habits

Get enough sleep, eat healthy foods, drink plenty of fluids and exercise to keep your immune system strong.



Stay Home When Sick

Avoid leaving the house if you are showing symptoms. Connect with a healthcare provider to be tested and for treatment.



Symptoms of COVID-19

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Chills
- Muscle Pain
- Headache
- Sore Throat

Maryland Has First Reported Heat-Related Death Of 2020

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) announced the first reported heat-related death of 2020 in Maryland on July 27. The death occurred in Baltimore City and the decedent was a male in his 30s.

“As this tragedy shows, heat-related illnesses, heat exhaustion and heat stroke can result in serious ailments and even death,” said MDH Secretary Robert Neall. “Especially as we’re seeing higher heat indexes across the state, Marylanders are urged to take precautions to avoid overheating and to know the signs at the onset of any heat-related illness so they can seek medical attention, if necessary.”

From May through September, MDH monitors temperature conditions and incidents of heat-related illness and death. Weekly reports

may be found online through the Office of Preparedness and Response Extreme Heat website. The site also includes the state Heat Emergency Plan, information about heat-related illnesses and tips for staying safe and healthy during hot weather.

MDH encourages using the following tips to help cope with hot weather:

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and overly-sweetened beverages
- Wear loose-fitting, light-weight and light-colored clothing
- Avoid direct sunlight and wear sunscreen; stay in the shade when possible
- Avoid salt tablets, unless advised by a doctor



people under age 5 or over age 65, people with chronic illnesses, people taking certain medications, and those who are exercising or working outdoors.

Marylanders should never leave children or pets in a car for any amount of time during hot weather, even with the windows cracked, and are encouraged to check on elderly neighbors or relatives to ensure they have a cool place to stay.

Individuals in need of cooling centers are encouraged to reach out to their local health department or call 2-1-1 and provide their county location and ZIP code to get information about cooling center locations, hours of operation and available accommodations. ■

- to take them
- Take it easy outside: schedule physical activity in the morning or evening, when it’s cooler, and take short breaks if necessary

While anyone can be a victim of heat-related illness, highest risk groups include

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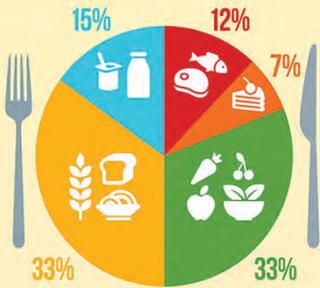
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The Nation's Public Health Experts To America: **Donate Plasma**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through its top public health officials, has released a series of public service announcements (PSAs) imploring Americans to donate their plasma and help save lives. The PSA campaign seeks to dramatically increase donations of convalescent plasma by the end of August in the whole-of-America fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

"Americans who have recovered from COVID-19 have a key role to play by donating plasma with antibodies that have the potential to save lives and help beat the virus," said HHS Secretary Alex Azar.

The plasma of individuals who have recovered from an infection like COVID-19 may contain anti-

bodies made by the immune system that can neutralize or kill the virus. Convalescent plasma therapy provides antibodies from those who have recovered from the virus to people who have recently contracted the virus so they may be better able to fight it off. Some data suggest that convalescent plasma may have a role in treating COVID-19, but more studies are needed. These studies will require the help of Americans who have recovered from COVID-19 who are willing to donate their plasma. That is why public health experts have released these new videos, in a campaign calling on Americans to take action.

For the latest information on HHS efforts to fight COVID-19, visit www.coronavirus.gov. ■

When The Caregiver Needs Care

Continued from page 6

succumb to illness. When burn-out hits, a caregiver will likely feel guilty or resentful and may make mistakes that endanger the loved one or other members of the family.

Alleviating Caregiver Burnout – The Solution

The best solution is to be proactive so that this doesn't happen in the first place. Self-care is essential and is often neglected by caregivers. Instead of putting self-care last, move it to the top of the priority list. While you may feel selfish making your self-care a priority, please consider that without a strong, healthy mind and body, you will not be able to care for anyone!

Everyone needs a break from time to time. Here are some suggestions for self-care:

- Hire respite care regularly
- Schedule personal care, haircuts and

manicures/pedicures

- Keep up your exercise routine to help your body process stress hormones
- Visit friends
- See a therapist if you have problems processing feelings
- Call a friend
- Enlist other family members in caregiving – share the burden
- Limit your daily expectations to a short "do list" each day. Don't try to do too much

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Helping to support the community's aging population is our passion at Lean On Dee Senior Care Advocates. Many people don't know that this valuable resource is available to families. We don't just care for seniors; we also support caregivers. Contact Lean On Dee today at 800-413-8733 and learn how much more rewarding caregiving can be. ■

Supporting Speech/Language Development During Home-Based E-Learning

Continued from page 3

- Singing songs throughout the day is an easy way to increase language exposure and aid in transitioning from activities and routines.
- Cause and effect toys are great ways to create language opportunities. Children can practice words such as "more," "go," "stop," "on," "off" and "like."
- Sound play is foundational for speech and language development. Be extra noisy and silly when playing with toys or when playing people games like peek-a-boo. Gain your child's attention when producing sounds, which may be more difficult for them to say.

For school-aged children, there are plenty of opportunities to foster creativity and independence while supporting problem-solving skills:

- Encourage creative activities such as arts and crafts. Many language concepts can be incorporated, such as prepositions and adjectives.
- Having your child follow directions is a great way to promote a language-rich environment. A great approach is letting them lend a hand in the kitchen. As a bonus, they will explore new ingredients and build healthy eating habits.
- Search for target words in books, songs and curriculum material for opportunities to practice difficult sounds in words, sentences and conversations. A mirror can be helpful for children to see where their lips, teeth and tongue are positioned when producing sounds.

For children of any age, consider incorporating these tasks into their curriculum or routine:

- Playing "I Spy" gives your child a chance to identify objects and express descriptors and functions. For extra fun, plan a scavenger hunt!
- Obstacle courses can be great for language fun as well as gross motor skills. Kids are imaginative, so think creatively with what you already have at home (laundry baskets, pillows, boxes).
- Parents can make passive activities (like screen time) more interactive by interrupting to ask questions and describe nouns and verbs. For older kids, challenge them to hold a conversation rather than answer simple questions.
- Providing lots of sensory input can promote healthy language learning. Try playing with Jell-O, water, or sand to allow your child to explore with all their senses.

Thinking about the upcoming school year is stressful for families. You can alleviate stress and anxiety in children by establishing consistent routines and structure. Dedicating a workspace and providing a schedule can help them understand expectations and transition from one task to the next. By incorporating language-rich activities into home life, you can support your child's speech and language regardless of how and where their curriculum is delivered.

You can access reliable resources about speech and language development, delays and disorders at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association website at www.asha.org. For more information, visit www.buddingvoices.com or contact Morgan Schmincke at morgan@buddingvoices.com. ■

CORONAVIRUS COVID-19

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LEARN THE FACTS, SHARE THE FACTS, STOP THE FEAR

SUPPORT STRATEGIES

How to support yourself and others during social distancing, quarantine or isolation

Connect With Others

Reach out to family and friends through phone calls, texting, email, video chats or social media.

Support Your Immune System

Try to maintain a healthy lifestyle of eating regular meals, exercising and getting 7-9 hours of sleep daily.

Take A Break

Working or learning remotely is new to many, and can be draining. Remember to practice self-care.

It's OK To Go Outside!

Being outside in nice weather is healthy. Be sure to practice social distancing and avoid areas where people gather. Enjoy the fresh air from your front porch, ride a bike, play with your kids or take a walk.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If you experience symptoms of extreme stress such as trouble sleeping, inability to carry out daily activities or using drugs and alcohol to cope, use one of the hotlines below to get help.

Resources For Help

Stress, anxiety and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions to this current situation. If you or a loved one are feeling overwhelmed or struggling to cope, or if you're in a dangerous home situation, reach out for help. There are confidential 24-hour-a-day services available that will connect you with trained counselors.

Suicide Prevention Resources

Call 911 for immediate assistance in any emergency.

CRISIS WARMLINE — 410-768-5522

MARYLAND YOUTH CRISIS HOTLINE

— 1-800-422-0009

211 MARYLAND — DIAL 2-1-1,
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

AACPS STUDENT SAFETY HOTLINE

— 1-877-676-9854

SAMHSA DISASTER DISTRESS HELPLINE

— 1-800-985-5990 or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINES

— 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

— 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Domestic Violence Resources

24-HR YWCA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE
— 410-626-6800

MOBILE CRISIS — 410-768-5522

VICTIM ADVOCATE — 410-260-1800

MARYLAND NETWORK AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — 301-429-3601

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE
— 1-800-799-7233

Anne Arundel County Dept. Of Health

COVID-19 HEALTH LINE

— 410-222-7256

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