

BE MINDFUL: Take Care of Yourself - And Each Other...



With cases rising and falling, total lock down, partial lock down, it's important to take the time to take care of yourself and anyone around you that may need some help. Here are some tips to help:

Recognize signs of anxiety Because of COVID-19, the idea of having a high degree of anxiety might be new to many people, so know what to look for. **The top 10 signs of stress: irritability, obsessive thoughts, excessive worry, panic, difficulty concentrating, making decisions, fatigue, sleep disturbances, over thinking, irrational fears and heart palpitations.** Knowing the signs can also be a good thing when dealing with close friends, colleagues or family who are also dealing with COVID-19 stress as well.

Connect more with others through LISTENING With many people working from home, dealing with isolation and difficulties connecting with others, the importance of human connection has become even more important. Connections are everything. Meaningful bonds drive happiness. **The key to better connections is the ability to listen, a skill which has a tendency to decline with decreased social interaction.** Listening can be a simple thing such as whenever you ask the question, "How are you doing?" There's the honest and true intention of hearing out the answer and not just asking as a form of greeting.

Bounce back from stress with exercise Easier said than done! It's long been known that exercise can help people bounce back from stress, and it isn't any different now. Quarantine might give you more time, more opportunity and motivation to exercise. But, what triggers somebody to exercise is different from person to person. It's easy to sit at a desk and eat a bag of chips and say, "Exercise is good for you!" knowing full well you shouldn't eat that next chip.

Parents, take care of yourselves too Moms, dads and parents in general have a tendency to ignore their own mental wellbeing because of that sense of responsibility towards the family. Unfortunately, if as a parent we're not in a good place mental health-wise, that can manifest in interactions with family, which then in turn defeats the whole purpose of "family first" because of the negative impact. Parental self-care is important and can help kids weather some of the added pandemic stress they may be facing.

Plan time for yourselves, alone and with the family. Maybe your time alone could be a walk together around your block or to a park and back. Just getting away and taking time to breathe is allowing your system to experience calm and you will also benefit from fresh air and each other.

If you are struggling to keep your spirits up during COVID. Counselors are available through EAP. It's confidential and FREE! Call the **COVID Counseling helpline 800-801-4182**, or **402-354-8000** or email eap@bestcareeap.org to schedule an appointment.