

Dear Parents and Families,

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month. As counselors, we cannot think of a better time to focus on our families' mental health. A big part of this is being able to better manage our emotional stress. We found the following article to have several helpful tips.

Managing Stress During COVID-19

To say we as a world are under a lot of stress right now is an understatement. Every time you turn on the TV or check your phone there seems to be another reason for your stress level to increase.

Some level of stress is good — it can help us rethink that extra trip to the grocery store when we went yesterday or reconsider the in-person check-in we had planned with a friend when we've been asked to stay home. Stress can help keep us safe.

It can also have negative impacts on our wellbeing. Stress can impact our ability to concentrate and make decisions, may leave us feeling angry, irritable or out of control, or perhaps manifest as a headache, stomachache or low energy. Understanding our body's signs of stress is the first step to knowing what to do about it.

How has your body been letting you know that you are getting out of balance, heading into stress?

Often, we adjust our habits related to caring for our body in response to stress. What patterns do you notice in the following three areas of your health habits?

What are you noticing about your eating habits when you are stressed?

What are you noticing about your physical exercise habits when you are stressed?

How about your sleep pattern?

If we know we eat more unhealthy foods while stressed, how can we plan healthy snacks and limit our access to unhealthy ones? If we know stress leaves us wanting to sit on the couch all day, how can we set up a routine that infuses movement or even set an alarm every hour to remind us to get up and move around? If we find we can't fall asleep as easily, how can we start our bedtime routine earlier to allow for more time to wind down, possibly eliminating media that causes stress before bed. Knowing how our bodies respond to stress can help us best plan for how to manage it.

When making your stress management plan, consider these five basic tips provided by [The Cleveland Clinic](#) on how to manage stress during COVID-19.

- 1. Exercise regularly.** Movement helps us feel better and remain positive. While we're restricted from attending gyms and yoga classes, we can still go for walks, runs and play outside. And YouTube provides lots of free virtual options for workouts at home.



Continued from page 1.

2. **Maintain a healthy diet.** Our diet and mood are so closely linked. When we can put healthy foods into our body, it helps our energy level, creativity and mood.
3. **Take a break.** Find ways to take a break from the constant COVID-19 coverage and stress of living in today's conditions. Start a new hobby, read a fictional novel, reorganize a part of your home, or work on a home project you've been putting off.
4. **Connect with others.** Connection with others can help us reduce our stress level and provides opportunities for joy, laughter and fun. Do a coffee date with a friend over video chat or organize a virtual book club.
5. **Get sleep and rest.** Stress becomes even more overwhelming when we don't get enough sleep. Maintaining a routine that allows us to get the recommended amount of sleep will help us manage the stress ahead of us.

After you have created a plan, take some time to tell a friend or family member about it. Soliciting help from others can help you stick to your plan and gives you another reason to practice connection with others.

Something equally important as eating right, exercising, and sleeping is our ability to practice self-compassion when our strategies don't go as planned. When we choose the cookies over the carrots or the extra TV show over the run, let's give ourselves a break and tell ourselves we'll try again next time.

To view this article and other helpful articles on resilience during this time, please visit <https://compassionresiliencetoolkit.org/staying-resilient-during-covid-19/>.

Sincerely,
Your School Social Workers and School Counselors
School Social Work Program
Catholic Charities Indianapolis

WEEKLY TIP FOR PARENTS:

In order to care of our families, we have to make sure we are taking care of ourselves. Here is a list of 20 self-care suggestions:

1. Listen to a podcast.
2. Take a walk.
3. Pray.
4. Call a friend.
5. Cook or bake something.
6. Start a new book.
7. Take a nap.
8. Watch the sunrise or sunset.
9. Play a board game with your family.
10. Journal.
11. Go for a run.
12. Watch a funny television show or movie.
13. Do a random act of kindness.
14. Listen to music that speaks to you.
15. Paint or color.
16. Take a break from social media.
17. Try a yoga class on YouTube.
18. Make a bucket list.
19. Go for a hike.
20. Make a list of things that you are grateful for.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Community Compass is a free, quick and easy app designed to show people where they can find food assistance in Marion County. With a smart phone, you can find free meal locations and free grocery locations near you. If you do not have a smart phone, you can text the word "hi" to 317-434-3758.

Indianapolis Public Schools webpage offers up-to-date information on local food and other community resources

<https://myips.org/blog/district/community-partners-continue-to-provide-resources-to-families-los-socios-comunitarios-continuan-brindando-recursos-a-las-familias/>

The City of Indianapolis website has a list of community resources and supports aimed at helping those that are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.indy.gov/topic/covid>

2-1-1 is a free and confidential service that helps Hoosiers across Indiana find the local resources they need. Dial 2-1-1 for 24-hours a day, 7 days a week support.

Catholic Charities Crisis Office 317-236-1512

St. Vincent de Paul Help Line 317-687-0169

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:

National Crisis Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

Crisis line via online chat at:

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/> or by text:

Send the word HOME to 741741

Community Health Network: 317-621-5700

Provides immediate assessments by phone for persons experiencing a mental health crisis 24 hours daily and offers referrals and scheduling for mental health and addiction treatment providers.

Sandra Eskenazi Mental Health Center: 317-880-8485

Provides 24-hour telephone crisis interventions for persons with mental health or addiction treatment emergencies.

Aspire Indiana Crisis Line: 1-800-560-4038

Provides 24 hour phone crisis interventions for persons experiencing a mental health or addictions crisis.

Adult and Child Mental Health Center: 1-877-882-5122

Provides a 24-hour crisis and referral phone line.

Families First: 317-251-7575

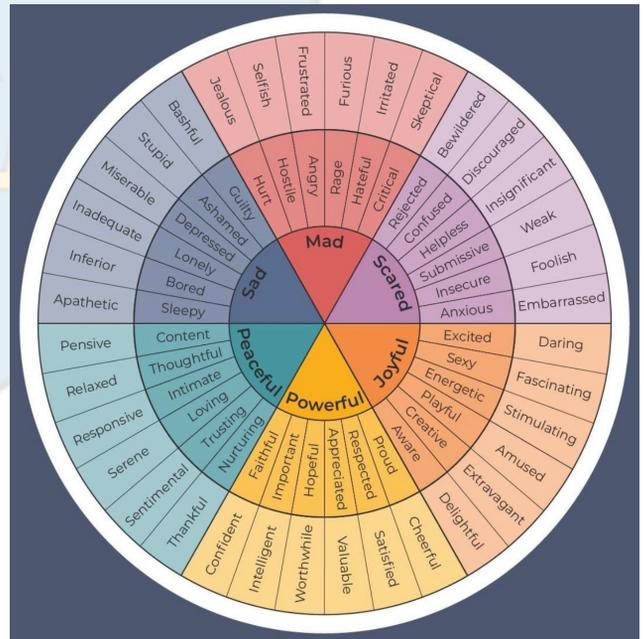
24-hour crisis and suicide intervention services by both phone and text messaging.

Indiana Coalition against Domestic Violence: 1-800-332-7385

Offers 24-hour crisis intervention, safety planning and shelter referrals for persons in domestic violence situations.

HAPPY, HEALTHY KIDS AT HOME:

How are you feeling today?



Whatever you are feeling is OKAY.