HEALTH AND WELLNESS
SCHOOL AND PARENT RESOURCES

February 2021

New Year. Better Strategies for Managing COVID Stress.

Mental health concerns, substance abuse and suicidal ideation has increased during the pandemic. Services not being offered due to unrecognized signs of people in need is a concern for many in the social service field. Kirsten Freitag-Murray, Director of Development and Public Relations for Creative Health Services summarized taking steps to help manage stress as we welcome 2021.

-Keep a routine.

-Send notes and cards to loved ones.

-Play outside as a family.

-Talk to your children about their feelings of isolation.

-Take a break from media.

-Stay connected to family and friends by video chatting and playing virtual games.

-Worship virtually, if in-person is not an option.

-Model healthy behavior for your children: Wash your hands and socially distance.

A New Parenting Narrative!

Parenting is a lifelong journey. Here are some tips for children of all ages.

Instead of this - Stop yelling at your brother!
Try this: You're feeling really angry right now.
Instead of this - Don't talk to me that way!
Try this: I'll listen when your voice is as calm and quiet as mine.

Instead of this - You're grounded for a month!
Try this: We need some time to think this through. Let's talk when we are both calm.

Instead of this - Great job!
Try this: This took a lot of detailed thinking to create. Tell me about it!

Instead of this - You're eating broccoli for dinner!
This: You may choose broccoli or carrots. Which would you like?

Instead of this - What's wrong?
Try this: It looks like you are feeling overwhelmed. Want to talk?

Instead of this - Be careful!
Try this: Let's move the table out of the way first.

Instead of this - You're not getting your permit until these grades are up!
Try this: We know it's important to you to get your permit soon. Let's talk about our expectations and how we can help you achieve your goal.

Instead of this - Go put your shoes on!
Try this: It's raining and we need to wear shoes. Where are yours?

Understanding Shame

Happy, sad, excited, disappointed are all emotions that children and teens experience that are often transparent to the adults in their lives. Shame, however, the feeling of humiliation, not being good enough and/or being unworthy, is often a very powerful emotion that is hidden from loved ones. Thoughts like "I am bad", or "I am unlovable" are some ways individuals feel who are struggling with shame. These feelings are so profound that they can shape how one views the world as well as the self. Unresolved shame may contribute to increased anxiety, depression, and possibly substance abuse.

Dr. Brené Brown, a leading researcher on shame believes "If we can cultivate enough awareness about shame, to name it, and speak to it, we've basically cut it off at the knees". **The ability for young people to understand what shame is and the ability to label that emotion will help them overcome shame-based thinking.** Once this process has started, encourage self-compassion.

Encourage children and teens "to give themselves a break" sometimes. When shame is present, the self is a tough critic. Remind young people to treat themselves with kindness and love even when one falls short of one's own standard.

Mindfulness in the Time of COVID-19

We are living in a time of great uncertainty with many unknowns. Most children are learning from home while parents are working from home. Teachers are struggling to teach effectively. And even though vaccines are beginning to be administered, we still do not know for certain when we will be able to live "normally" again.

This can create additional stress in our every-day lives. Yet, one need not allow stress to dictate how we feel. All of us can take authority over our thoughts and feelings. Mindfulness is a wonderful tool for reducing stress through monitoring our thoughts, which affect our emotions. Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we are doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around us or by the thoughts in our head.

Take a deep breathe: Literally. Don't you feel better? By simply breathing and focusing on your breathing, you can feel more relaxed. When entering the world of mindfulness, there is Mindful awareness and Mindful Meditation, both of which can be extremely helpful. Being Mindfully Aware happens when you use tools throughout the day to remain focused on the here and now and avoid stress.

Here are some ways to be Mindfully Aware:

Squeeze Muscles: Starting at your toes, pick one muscle and squeeze it tight. Count to five. Release, and notice how your body changes. Repeat exercise moving up your body.

Belly Breathing: Put one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. Slowly breathe in from your stomach (feel it expand like a balloon) and slowly breathe out (deflate).

Mindful Meal: Pay attention to the smell, taste and look of your food. Put yourself fully in the action of eating. No multitasking.

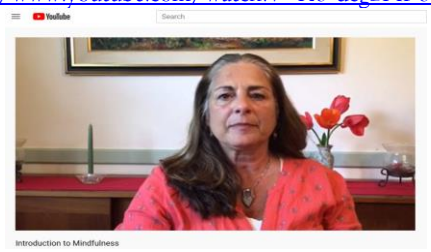
Meditation: Sit in a relaxed, comfortable position. Pick something to focus on, like your breath, or a calming visualization. When your mind wanders, bring your attention back.

Listening to Music: Focus on the whole song or listen specifically to the voice or an instrument. Mindful Meditation can be done in a few minutes, as suggested above, or one can seek guided meditations online. Guided meditations provide a deeper and more relaxing way of letting go of stress.

Links for quick and easy guided meditations:

An Introduction to Mindfulness:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6-dcgSHP6c&t=2s



Mindfulness for Adults:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgITPYPeYKY&t=69s

Mindfulness for Children:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gT7oFH7i7vs&t=8s

Mindfulness for Teens:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QO1p07asQ4

Simply doing an internet search on Mindfulness will provide you with more articles, internet links and allow you to further explore your guide to living a less stressful life.

We can make peace with the uncertainties we are facing by controlling where our minds go and remaining PRESENT.

Sulyn Godsey

Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center offers a comprehensive, multidisciplinary team response to allegations of child abuse in Montgomery County. Every day, their goal is to achieve healing and justice for child abuse victims. At their Child Advocacy Center in East Norriton, they provide neutral, fact-finding forensic interviews which are coordinated to avoid additional trauma to children who have experienced abuse. Their team of professionals supports Montgomery County's multidisciplinary team approach by working with child welfare professionals, law enforcement, prosecutors, medical providers, and mental health clinicians. In the past decade, the team has served over 5,000 children and provided a sense of hope, safety, and healing as children and families overcome the trauma of abuse. Mission Kids is also dedicated to keeping kids safe by providing prevention education to children and adults to empower our community to speak out against child abuse and take the necessary steps to protect children. While Mission Kids serves children and families in Montgomery County, they're recognized as a statewide leader in Pennsylvania, and have increased their impact on a national and global scale by providing advocacy, mentorship, leadership, and education.

Partnership with CHS

On-site Trauma Therapy: Mission Kids offers on-site trauma therapy for children and their families through a partnership with Creative Health Services. Kala Fell, LMFT is Creative Health Services' Clinical Liaison to Mission Kids who provides clinical support to staff and team members and co-facilitates presentations about the importance of trauma intervention services to therapists, team members, education professionals, and other community organizations. Kala, along with Meghan Kerper, LSW., both provide trauma-focused therapy for children and families referred by Mission Kids. This ensures that children who have experienced physical abuse, sexual abuse, or who have witnessed violent crime will have a seamless healing experience throughout their therapeutic intervention process. Using trauma informed-therapy methods, children learn healthy ways to express their feelings and to talk about what happened to them. Caregivers are involved in the therapy process to develop a clearer understanding of how trauma affects their child, and learn tools to help them communicate with and support their child throughout the healing process.

"Child Abuse and Trauma-informed Classrooms" Collaborative Workshop: Kala Fell has partnered with Mission Kids' Prevention Education and Outreach Manager, Michelle McDyre to provide a collaborative workshop to nearly 1,200 education and child welfare professionals in Montgomery County, and have expanded their impact on a statewide level across PA. In this 2-hour workshop, Participants will learn about the dynamics of child abuse and the signs, symptoms, and short-term and long-term effects of trauma and adverse childhood experiences, which will help them address the needs of individual students who have experienced child abuse or other trauma.
Participants will learn how trauma affects classroom performance and academic achievement. Participants will learn how to foster a "wellness culture" for students who may have experienced trauma and feel more empowered to use a trauma-informed approach. By understanding the dynamics and effects of child abuse and trauma, participants will be better able to integrate this knowledge more deeply into the day-to-day life students in order to improve learning and raise academic achievement.
Body Safety Tips and/or Encourage Parents to Report Concerns

ROAR: Mission Kids is committed to preventing child abuse. Across Montgomery County, Mission Kids offers the ***"ROAR"*** *Program, which* is a child-focused education program that teaches children ages 4-8 body safety and empowers them to raise their voices to speak out against abuse. The interactive and easy to implement lesson is designed to be taught in a classroom or group setting. A lion named Rex and his animal friends take children on journey to find his ***ROAR,*** a simple and memorable acronym that teaches children that their bodies are their own and empowers children to stand up against abuse. ***ROAR*** empowers children to understand personal body safety, speak out against abuse, and identify three safe adults to go to when they feel unsafe. **These lessons are needed now, more than ever!** Due to school closures and stay-at-home orders throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic, students are disconnected from safe adults such as teachers, counselors, and coaches. Children who are isolated from safe adults are at a higher risk of being abused. We know now, more than ever, children need these important lessons and resources. HELP KEEP KIDS SAFE: Mission Kids is encouraging every school in Montgomery County to include this important child abuse prevention and body safety lesson for children in grades K-2 in their plans for this school year. Contact Mission Kids' Prevention Education and Outreach Manager, Michelle McDyre at mmcdyre@missionkidscac.org for more information.

For more information about mandated reporting, you can visit:
http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/
If you're interested in learning more about Mandated Reporting and Handling Child Abuse Disclosures, Mission Kids a specialized virtual training that covers this. Contact Mission Kids' Prevention Education and Outreach Manager, Michelle McDyre at mmcdyre@missionkidscac.org for more information.

Encourage kids and teens to use the "Safe 2 Say Something" Mobile App or Hotline to report concerns of abuse. This is a perfect tool during COVID-19 for children who are feeling unsafe at home or are worried about a friend.

Website: https://www.safe2saypa.org/
Phone: 1-844-SAF2SAY (723-2729)
Get the App: https://www.safe2saypa.org/download

REPORTING CONCERNS OF ABUSE

If you suspect child abuse or neglect, you can make a report using PA ChildLine:

1-800-932-0313

If you are a mandated reporter, you can file an electronic report using the online portal here:
https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis

A Safe Bet?

So you may be familiar with the story of a cucumber versus a pickle when it comes to gambling; if not it goes like this.

A cucumber is someone who can gamble a little, even a whole lot more than anticipated, but can return to normal life. A pickle is someone who can lose it all, damage relationships but still wants to move to a place like Las Vegas to be closer to the action. And once you are a pickle, there is no returning to being a cucumber.

Gambling can be fun and a source of entertainment for many but for others it is an addiction. Addiction tends to develop over time and is heavily influenced by accessibility. Think about a college freshman and the first six weeks of being on campus. Alcohol consumption often increases with the newfound ease of obtaining alcoholic beverages. Gambling, specifically online gambling, is accessible at your fingertips. Online casinos, online poker and sports betting are now just a click of a button in Pennsylvania.

According to the Responsible and Problem Gambling Resources in Pennsylvania, problem gambler signs are as follows: Preoccupation with gambling, lying and secretive behavior around gambling behaviors, irritability when not gambling, jeopardizing relationships, and school/work performance decline.

One may argue with the onset of sports betting, a more universal audience has been captured, particularly youth.

A Sunday ritual of pre-game football now includes odds about the game. Football commercials include both alcohol and sports betting promotions. Sports fans of all ages are exposed to advertisements from sites like FanDuel or FOX BET, where individuals are lured in by the first bet being risk free up to $1000.00.

Perhaps the only safe bet is to have conversations with others, especially youth, about the costs of problem gambling behaviors.

The Benefits of Gratitude

Gratitude, simply defined as the quality of being thankful, has shown to promote positive thoughts and actions on the part of the participant. With COVID-19 restrictions and limitations, and the long winter months ahead, practicing gratitude rituals are encouraged.

Try to think about something you are thankful for each day before you roll out of bed or before you fall asleep. It can be individuals in your life, things such as a Mom's homemade pasta, a warm blanket, or something that is happening in your community.

By having the ability to look and notice good things in our environment, we will learn to seek out and appreciate more positive things that surround us.

Gratitude is strongly associated with improved mental health and a proven positive coping skill in times of adversity. Also, expressing gratitude is rewarding. An act of kindness, telling friends you miss them, a simple thank you are ways to create a cycle of good. Remember to take time to pause for gratitude each day. Be well.

CATCH® MY BREATH
E-CIGARETTE & JUUL PREVENTION PROGRAM

CATCH This New Program!

One of the new programs that Montgomery County is excited to offer schools this year is a vaping prevention evidence-based program. **CATCH My Breath** was developed by the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health. The program works to accomplish one of the goals that comes from Montgomery County Needs Assessment. The goal focusses on reducing youth use of electronic tobacco devices. There are curriculums for 5th grade, 6th grade, 7/8th grades, and 9-12th grades which all consist of 4 lessons at 35-40 minutes each. The key objectives for these curriculums that are taught to students include: knowledge of e-cigarettes and potential harms, understanding and analyzing deceptive advertising techniques, developing and practicing socially acceptable refusal skills, and practicing peer modeling techniques in small groups. Students create their own slogan or campaign for preventing vaping use.

To learn more about the CATCH programs, visit the CATCH Global Foundation website: **https://catchinfo.org/**

2020-2021 Opioid Overdose Awareness Billboard Competition

Attn High School Students: Artwork competition focusing on the prevention of opioid misuse and overdose

Great! What do I need to do?

Just follow these GUIDELNES!

Prizes!

1st Place: *$200 Amazon Gift Card and your design will be featured on billboards around MontcoPA.*

2nd Place: *$150 Amazon Gift Card*

3rd Place: *$100 Amazon Gift Card*

All "winners" will be acknowledged at a Board of Commissioner's meeting in April.

Promotional prize for all participants.

Competition Guidelines

Artwork should focus on a positive message that will discourage substance abuse, specifically a direct announcement that highlights opioid misuse and overdose.

- **Use any medium.**
- **No photographs that include other people.**
- **Must display 24-hour national hotline number: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)**
- **Any submission that does not directly relate to opioid overdose will be automatically disqualified. Examples of opioids: Heroin, Oxycodone, Percocet, Fentanyl, etc.**
- **Artwork with copyrighted or trademarked characters such as comic, television, or movie characters, using logos or trademarked names of specific products, or that include any political references, images or messages will be disqualified.**
- **Artwork with inappropriate or discriminatory language or symbols will be disqualified.**
- **Team entries are not allowed - do not submit artwork created by more than one person.**

Qualifying artwork will be judged on content, quality, and creativity.
All submissions are due to nsoltani@montcopa.org by March 26, 2021 by midnight and must include your name, school, and grade.

Montgomery County
Department of
Health and Human Services

If you have questions, please contact Neda Soltani, nsoltani@montcopa.org or 610-278-3000, ext. 6838.

FAIR FIGHTING

Learn the do's and don'ts of conflict resolution and receive step-by-step instruction for effective communication. Online presentation offered by Royersford Public Library, presented by Beverly Fox, a Licensed Professional Counselor from Spring-Ford Counseling Services.

No cost! Preregistrion is required:

https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUucuCrrz8qEt24RKMM8oSj8jdLkgC7HZP9

Thursday, February 11 ~ 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Click to Register

REGISTER NOW

NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness
Find Help. Find Hope.

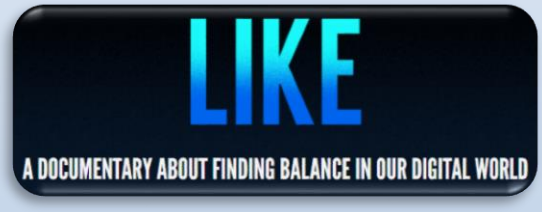
Please find links for two upcoming free screenings offered by NAMI

LIKE

THE REAL IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON OUR LIVES

FEBRUARY 10TH, 5:30-7PM

Click to register:



NO COST! Register at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_T9fWr3lRT5ukALDAjEDYIg

THE UPSTANDERS

MARCH 10TH, 5:30-7PM

Click to register:

NO COST! Register at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Lq8I1hsYRTixEoRjxNpfYg

Community Connections

- **Navicate**

  610-278-3522
  Community Connection Navicates are skilled human service professionals who are knowledgeable about local, county, and state resources

- **Peer Support/Teen Talk Text**

  Call: 866.825.5856
  Text: 215.703.8411
  teentalkline@accessservices.org

- **Montgomery County Mobile Crisis**

  Available 24/7

  1-855-634-HOPE (4673)

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:**

  1-800-273-TALK (8255)

- **Línea Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio:**

  1-888-628-9454

- **Crisis Text Line:**

  Text "PA" to 741-741

- **Safe2Say: 1-844-723-2729 or www.safe2saypa.org**

- **Veteran Crisis Line:**

  1-800-273-TALK (8255)

- **Disaster Distress Helpline:**

  1-800-985-5990

- **Get Help Now Hotline:**

  (for substance use disorders)

  1-800-662-4357

- **PA Gambling Addiction 24-hour hotline:**

  1-800-GAMBLER

MONTGOMERY COUNTY Naloxone

Where to get Naloxone

Pharmacies with standing order
montcopa.org/overdoseprevention

Where to dispose of unused medication

Drop-box locations
montcopa.org/overdoseprevention

Where to get treatment

Individuals with Medical Assistance insurance or no insurance should contact the following Case Management Assessment sites:

Eastern MontCo (Willow Grove Area)
Gaudenzia
830 Twining Road, Suite 1, Dresher, PA 19025
215-433-1634

Central MontCo (Norristown Area)
Gaudenzia
166 West Main Street, Norristown, PA 19401
610-279-4262

Western MontCo (Pottstown Area)
Creative Health Services
11 Robinson Street, Pottstown, PA 19464
610-327-1503

Newsletter created by Creative Health Services and funded through Montgomery County Office of Mental Health.

Creative HEALTH SERVICES

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services