

# The Wellness Gazette

..... Your Source for Health, Mental Health, & Developmental Tips, Hints, & Ideas .....

December 2020

Whew! What a year it has turned out to be! When the world turned upside down in March and schools closed, many of us thought it would be two weeks or at most a few months of social distancing. Unfortunately, here we are in November with the pandemic and much of the associated stress continuing, perhaps more so than ever!

In my own naïve state of denial, it took me a while to realize that this pandemic is a marathon and not a sprint. Back in the spring, despite the fear and disruption of routines, I felt hopeful and inspired by the positive messaging of “We’re all in this together!” and the nurturing encouragement that, “We’re here for you!” (At one point I started humorously tracking how many emails I got from various online retailers just wanting to let me know they are here for me! So touching... I mean, thanks, Macy’s, for thinking of little old me!) Fast forward to November, and many of us are, well, tired. Tired of missing friends and family and not being together in person. Tired of the fear and stress and unknowns. Tired of 2020! Covid fatigue is a very real thing!

A phrase or mantra I find myself often revisiting, particularly as we support children with social-emotional needs was coined by psychologist Ross Greene: “Kids do well when they can.” And guess what? Adults do well when they can, too! And that is why this December edition of the Wellness Gazette is all about adult mental health.

When we as parents and caregivers are able to “put on our own oxygen mask first,” we are better able to meet our children’s needs, we’re more present, and we’re better regulated. A huge added bonus is that this is associated with better outcomes for our children, too! I sometimes think about supports for mental health occurs as occurring on a continuum that can range from general daily wellness practices to more intensive clinical supports to address concerns. At any point in time any one of us may need more support or less support! Regardless of where you fall on the continuum at this moment, I hope this month’s Wellness Gazette provides you with some information and resources that might inspire activities to bolster your overall wellness!

- Anne Bruehl, Health Director

## WHAT'S YOUR MANTRA?

Here are some apps that can help. From affirmations to quotes to challenges, there’s a little something for everyone!

1. [SelfishBabe](#) - Real, relatable, self-love straight to your phone
2. [ThinkUp](#) - The number one app for affirmations and motivation
3. [I am \(Apple\)](#) / [I am \(Android\)](#) - Change negative thoughts to positive
4. [Calm](#) - Sleep more. Stress less. Live better.
5. [Unique Daily Affirmations](#) - Start your day off right!
6. [Kwippy](#) - Daily prompts and challenges

Here are a few general tips to developing your own affirmations.

1. Start with “I am.”
2. Use present tense.
3. Make it specific.
4. But keep it brief!
5. Keep it positive!

# holidays

## WHEN YOU'RE GRIEVING

Whether you are missing a loved one or the normalcy of the season, many of us are feeling a loss this year. As we all learn how to get through it, we can't ignore the grief we feel for what used to be. Here are some tips on surviving the holidays in 2020!

Acknowledge the holidays will be different and they may be tough.

Create new traditions that embrace what the holidays mean to you.

Be honest with your loved ones. Let them know how you're feeling.

Decorate as much or as little as you want. No pressure!

Don't feel guilty for skipping events. Staying safe is most important!

Be understanding with those who don't feel the same as you.

Monitor how much you eat and how much alcohol you consume!

Reach out to friends and family you can talk to.

Consider talking to a doctor or therapist.

Browse the resources provided on the following page.

### Can you answer these questions correctly?

1. Poor mental health increases the risk for long-lasting physical conditions like:

- a. Heart disease.
- b. Stroke.
- c. Cancer.
- d. All of the above.

2. Mental illnesses are:

- a. Very common.
- b. Not very common.
- c. Fairly common.

3. Suicide is the \_\_\_\_\_ leading cause of death among ages 15-34 in the US.

- a. 24th
- b. 10th
- c. 40th
- d. 2nd

4. Mental illness

- a. Cannot be treated.
- b. Can be treated.

5. Mental health is

- a. The absence of mental disorders.
- b. Only important for some people.
- c. An important part of overall health and well-being.

6. If you know someone with poor mental health, you can help by:

- a. Reaching out and letting them know help is available.
- b. Helping them access mental health services.
- c. Learning and sharing facts about mental health, especially if you hear something that isn't true.
- d. All of the above.

Answers on the next page!

Did you know? Anxiety and depression affect up to 1 in 5 women during pregnancy or the first year postpartum. \*Rates might be even higher in 2020!

Postpartum Support Virginia ([www.postpartumva.org](http://www.postpartumva.org)) has some great resources to support women during and following pregnancy! Their “Path to Wellness,” along with many other great resources available on their website, offers some great suggestions that apply not only during the postpartum period, but also to adults in different life stages! Some people may only need a “boost” in self-care to feel better, while others will need more intensive supports that might include increased social support, therapy, and medication—or all of these, even!



Self-Care:

4-5 hours of uninterrupted sleep

Healthy meals and snacks

Gentle exercise—especially if it’s outside in fresh air and daylight

Taking a break or doing activities you enjoy

Social Support

Moms often need to connect with other mothers!

PSVA is offering virtual support groups for women with children of any age during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Social support can also be practical support—e.g., providing meals, babysitting, etc.—often much harder during a pandemic!

Talk Therapy:

Talking with an objective third party (e.g. social worker, professional counselor, psychologist, etc)

Medication:

Sometimes medication is needed. There are several different medications commonly used, and these can be prescribed by physicians (primary care physicians, OB/GYN, or psychiatrists).

Check out the full model and other great resources on the PSVa Website: [Postpartum Support Virginia](http://Postpartum Support Virginia)

[howrightnow.org](http://howrightnow.org)

Whatever you’re feeling - find resources and inspiration!

<https://www.mhanational.org/parenting>

Info about parenting and mental illness.

[www.parentingwell.org](http://www.parentingwell.org)

A website for parents with mental illness.

<https://postpartumva.org/>

Support for expectant and new mothers and their families to overcome anxiety, depression, and other perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (“PMADS”)

<https://www.samhsa.gov/families>

Resources for families coping with mental health and substance use disorders.

<https://www.crisistextline.org/>

Free, confidential texting support with a crisis counselor. To get started, just text 741741.

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> 1-800-273-8255

Answers to quiz on previous page 1. d 2. a 3. d 4. b 5. c 6. d

Do you have questions for the Mental Health Team? Do you need tips, strategies or resources to help you with a specific challenge? Let us know by sending a message through your child’s teacher or your Family Advocate or you can send an email to us directly at [mhsupport@childrenscenterva.com](mailto:mhsupport@childrenscenterva.com).

Is there a mental wellness topic you would like to know more about?

Please contact us at [mhsupport@childrenscenterva.com](mailto:mhsupport@childrenscenterva.com) to let us know!