
Mental Health First Aid Newsletter

July 2020

Dear Mental Health First Aiders,

We hope this newsletter finds you well and continuing to cope with the changes that have taken place in our country and community. Members of the Mental Health Association continue to weather the pandemic by working remotely to ensure the safety of our staff and colleagues. Much like the other nonprofits and groups in our area, we have been relying on videoconferences and phone calls to stay in touch with one another.

We want you to know that **we are still here for our community and offering free information and referral services to those who want to get connected with a therapist, support group or psychiatrist.** To access our online provider database 24/7, [click here](#). If you would prefer to connect with us by phone, give us a call during normal business hours at (540) 341-8732 ext. 2. If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, please call our region's 24/7 crisis line at (540) 825-5656.

Until we can gather again physically, we are sending you our best wishes for good mental and physical health.

Warmest regards,

Sallie Morgan
Executive Director

How is the Pandemic Affecting Mental Health?

It comes as no surprise that living through the era of social distancing has impacted the mental wellness of people everywhere. For many, the transition to working remotely, not being able to see family and friends on a regular basis, and additional economic pressures have increased stress. In a new statement from Mental Health America, we know that:

- The per day number of anxiety screenings completed in May was **370% higher** than in January, before coronavirus stress began. The per day number of depression screens was **394% higher** in May than in January.
- **“Loneliness and isolation”** are cited by the greatest percent of moderate to severe depression (73%) and anxiety (62%) screeners as contributing to mental health problems “right now.”
- **Special populations are also experiencing high anxiety and depression**, including LGBTQ, caregivers, students, veterans/active duty, and people with chronic health conditions

To read the full report on Mental Health America’s findings, [click here](#).

How Can Mental Health First Aiders Help?

Mental Health First Aiders have the unique opportunity to provide encouragement and support to those around them. They can play an integral role when individuals begin showing signs of distress. So how can we best utilize the skills we learned in class?

If you recall, our Mental Health First Aid Action Plan, ALGEE, outlines how we can help others:

- **Assess** for risk of suicide or harm
- **Listen nonjudgmentally**
- **Give** reassurance and information
- **Encourage** appropriate professional help
- **Encourage** self-help and other support strategies

Listening Nonjudgmentally

This month, we'll focus on how we can listen nonjudgmentally to those around us. Mental Health First Aid tells us that we can employ a few key attitudes to help people feel more respected and understood in their struggles:

- **Acceptance** – work to accept that someone's feelings are legitimate to them, even if you disagree with what they are saying.
- **Genuineness** – be authentic when approaching someone. We can show our genuineness by implementing some of the nonverbal skills below.
- **Empathy** – always strive to put yourself in someone else's shoes and look at their challenge from their point of view. This creates a higher level of understanding and empathy for that individual and what they are going through.

Nonverbal tips to show we're listening to someone:

- Attentiveness
 - Comfortable eye contact
 - Open body posture
 - Sitting next to the person rather than directly opposite
 - Do not fidget when you are speaking with someone
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Mental Health Provider Spotlight

Michelle Kelley, LCSW

Name of practice: Warrenton Women's Counseling Center

Specialty areas of practice: Teenage Girls and Women's Emotional Health

What Michelle has to say: "Our passion is helping teen girls and women to thrive in their relationships and emotional lives. We are excited to offer telehealth, outdoor counseling services, and walk and talk therapy."

Website: <https://www.warrentonwomenscounselingcenter.com>

Referring Someone to Treatment

If you or someone you know is experiencing any of the signs and symptoms above and is in need of assistance, here are some local resources that could be helpful:

- The Mental Health Association's **searchable provider database** includes information on local mental health and substance use providers in our area. **To access our database and get connected with a therapist, support group, or psychiatrist, [click here](#).**
 - **24/7 Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services Crisis Line:** (540) 825-5656
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- **PATH Community Link** offers assistance with finding local services such as transportation, food, financial assistance, health care, shelter, utility assistance, daycare and more: (855) 495-5465
- **Fauquier Community Resource Guide**
 - [Click here](#) to access our Community's Resource Guide, which contains a plethora of helpful resources
- **24/7 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** (800) 273-8255
- **24/7 Crisis Text Line:** Text “Home” to 741-741



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