



MAINTAINING positive mental health

DURING COVID-19

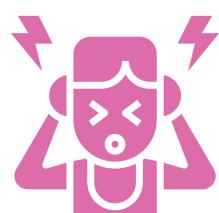
"The COVID-19 virus has made me feel depressed mainly because I am by myself and away from my friends. I have noticed that I feel more depressed because isolation is not and never has been good for me. Some of my friends are feeling anxious because they feel trapped in their houses."

- High School Freshman

Does the quote above sound familiar? Many of you are probably feeling the same way during the COVID-19 pandemic and it is very normal for you to experience these kinds of thoughts and feelings when your entire world turns upside down. City and state mandates require us to "social distance," which can have a negative impact on our mental and physical health. Mental health professionals prefer the term "physical distancing" as opposed to "social distancing," because we believe it is more important than ever to stay socially connected and engaged in order to be well and maintain positive mental health.

It seems like every day, sometimes every hour, new information about COVID-19 is thrown in our face and it is difficult to not only process what is happening but to also know what is best. One minute we are feeling just fine and the next we are stressed out!

**One minute we are feeling just fine
and the next we are STRESSED OUT!**



Not only are many of you worried about how this impacts you but also how this impacts your loved ones and your future.

"I don't necessarily feel scared from it but it kind of stinks and I do worry about my great grandparents and grandparents. And I definitely worry that things might never go back to normal after this pandemic!"
- 7th Grade Student

Students all over the country have had to put their lives on hold, including activities they have worked so hard on all year long, including athletics and fine arts. That alone can cause anxious feelings and discouragement.

"This has just chilled my mood because I can't do the things that I love like baseball, seeing my friends, and going to school. I can't even go to church or anywhere in public without worrying about getting sick or touching other people. You just can't live your normal life at this moment, and that is really hard." - High School Sophomore

These thoughts and feelings are absolutely normal. If you are experiencing the same thoughts please know that you are not alone. It is important to recognize the signs a mental health problem, know the coping skills, and stay connected to your mental health providers during these times.

- **Recognize signs of a mental problem**
- **Know coping skills**
- **Stay connected to mental health providers**

What are the signs that I might be struggling with my mental health?



Excessive fear, worry or sadness



Unhealthy changes in sleep or eating patterns



Excessive crying



Irritability and acting out



Poor motivation to do chores or school work



Avoiding things you used to find enjoyable



Using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs

It is important to know that you might experience feelings that you have never felt before. You might experience a significant increase in feelings or symptoms that you already struggle with on a daily basis. Either way, there is help.

What can I do to cope?



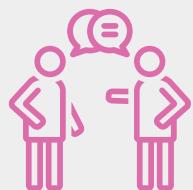
Take care of your body.

Be sure to get daily exercise, eat healthy (put away those Cheetos and Oreos), get plenty of sleep, drink water and stay away from drugs and alcohol.



Practice mindfulness.

Take three deep belly breaths any time you are feeling overwhelmed or anxious. Stretch throughout the day and think about a place you find peace and rest.



Find someone to talk to.

Visit with a friend or trusted adult and remember that mental health professionals are available day and night.



Stay connected using technology.

Start a group text with your best friends, and call a friend each day so you can hear another voice. Check in with your family members and visit about your favorite memories and traditions with video chats.



Look for connection opportunities.

Take advantage of connecting with your teachers and friends when given the opportunity.



Take up a new hobby.

Cooking, sports, music, gardening, sewing, bird watching – there are lots of hobbies to choose from!



Start a gratitude journal.

Take time to write down what you are grateful for each day.

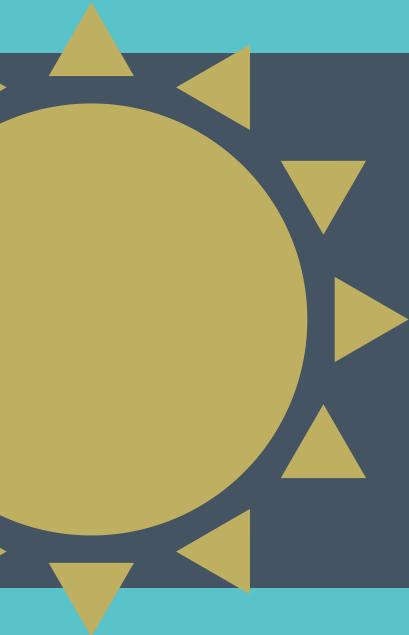


Watch positive videos.

Watch YouTube videos about positive mental health, like this one: youtube.com/watch?v=KF2hQ0XLf6U

What else can I do to pass the time?

GET OUTSIDE!



- Go for a walk (take the dog!)
- Ride a bike
- Jump rope/jumping jacks/burpees
- Practice Yoga
- Jump on a trampoline
- Go on a nature hike
- Take pictures of nature

GET CREATIVE!



- Make a new playlist
- Make stress balls or slime
- Bake or cook
- Draw, color, paint etc.
- Write a poem or a short story

GET EDUCATED!



- Virtual learning opportunities from your school
- Virtual Museum tours
 - Click here - Natural History Museum
 - Click here - Women's History
 - Click here for more!

Professional Help

"Going to counseling is just like going to the doctor when you have a physical ailment. It's taking care of yourself and it's nothing to be ashamed of. For me, counseling has helped me cope with problems that I don't know how to handle all on my own." - High School Freshman

If you are currently receiving mental health services, don't let COVID-19 be a reason to stop. If anything, it's now more important than ever! Many providers are offering telephone and Zoom sessions as a way to continue these vital services. If you haven't heard from your provider, reach out and ask how you can stay connected even though you aren't at school.

Talking to a professional is now more important than ever!

And if you don't already see a counselor but you notice you are experiencing some of the signs and symptoms previously listed, don't let COVID-19 keep you from getting treatment. Treatment IS AVAILABLE and your community mental health provider will have all the resources needed to start and maintain those services over the telephone, via Zoom, or even in person if your circumstances require it.

You can call Burrell Behavioral Health using the numbers on page 7 or e-mail schoolbasedinfo@burrellcenter.com to request a visit.

Just remember we are all in this together! Here's to being physically distant while socially connected until we can come together again!

**"We don't have to do all of it alone.
We were never meant to." - Brene Brown**

Call us anytime.

Schedule an Appointment

Southwest Missouri: 417-761-5000

Central Missouri: 573-777-8300

Northwest Arkansas: 479-575-9471

24-Hour Crisis Help Lines

Southwest Missouri: 1-800-494-7355

Central Missouri: 1-800-395-2132

Northwest Arkansas: 1-888-518-0108

BurrellCenter.com

