



Public Safety Psychological Services

20818 44th Ave W, Suite 150, Lynnwood, WA 98036
Office (425) 775-4477, fax (425) 527-0466

Cerise M. Vablais, MBA, PhD, ABPP
cvablais@psspc.net

Staying Sane In Insane Times

Welcome to the First Edition of “**Staying Sane in Insane Times**”, a weekly tip sheet is to support you and your families during this public health emergency. We know that you are bombarded with information so we hope that this gives some concrete, practical suggestions during this trying time. During our annual wellness visits, using the acronym **PIES**, we go over tips on how to stay healthy and resilient. It appears we may all be in our homes for 8 weeks. But, that’s only **56 days**. We can **DO THIS**. As always, if you or a loved one are feeling suicidal, please call “911”, Code4 Northwest or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

Physical Health – the “**P**”

1. Exercise – We get it. Gyms are closed. Check out bodyweight and functional training ideas from the internet. And do it outside if you can (with appropriate distance from others, of course) This includes kids – get them outside and moving. Daily walk around the neighborhood.
2. Nutrition – it’s easy during times of stress to overeat (or for some, not eat enough). Best plan is to stick to whole, basic, foods with a *protein, carb and healthy fat* at each meal. Avoid sugary and processed foods as much as possible. Drink more water than you think you need.
3. **GOAL:** This week I will _____
Examples: walk 30 minutes outside each day, find a 30 minute workout on the internet that I can do at home, etc.

Intellectual Health – the “**I**”

1. Keep your mind **occupied with useful things – Variety is key especially when face a period of limited external activities. And MAKE YOUR BED.** (Search for Admiral McRaven and the words “Make Your Bed”)
2. Learn something new – **What can you learn in 56 days?**
3. **CHALLENGE:** Do **ONE** new thing every day this week. It can be a small thing like watch a documentary on something you are interested in or that appeals to some of your “quarantine mates”.

Emotional Health – the “**E**”

1. We get it. This SUCKS. All emotions are valid right now: Fear, Anger, Sadness, Loneliness, Hopelessness. NONE of us living today really have any experience with something of this scale. Acknowledge That. Embrace It. And now, make a plan to DEAL with it. It’s just 56 days.
2. Engage in self-care. This can be exercise, talking to a friend (use video conferencing if you can). Spend time OUTSIDE. Be kind to yourself. We are all doing the best we can.
3. **GOAL:** This week I will _____
Examples: Take a long bath; Call my best friend and set up a video chat time

Spiritual Health – the “**S**”

1. The “S” is broadly defined. It can be your religious faith, your meditation or yoga practice or anything that gives you the opportunity to connect with something outside yourself. The “S” is really important right now when things feel scary and out of control
2. **CHALLENGE:** Pray or meditate **DAILY. Yes, DAILY.** It only takes 5 minutes. You have that long. If you are new to meditation or mindfulness practices, the internet has many resources and there are also free apps to help you in this mission.



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Staying Sane In Insane Times - Issue #2

This weekly tip sheet is to support you and your families during this public health emergency. During our annual wellness visits, using the acronym **PIES**, we discuss ideas for staying healthy and resilient. We welcome your ideas – email us at cvablais@psspc.net As always, if you or a loved one are feeling suicidal, please call “911”, Code4 Northwest or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

Physical Health – the “**P**”

1. *Exercise:* THE GYMS CLOSED. Time to get creative. Figure out a home workout solution ASAP. Pushups, squats and the dreaded burpee are enough to get your endorphins elevated. Many gyms are offering free online workouts – check some out.
2. *Physical Environment:* - Your physical environment affects your mental health. We get that **YOU** are still going to work. Talk to your housemates and families to set up a functional work or study from home area for all. Get creative. Having a clean space at home to return to does wonders for a busy, anxious mind.
CHALLENGE: Set up an area for bodyweight workouts or a home gym AND a work or study from home space. *Find a house plant or flowers (fake works too) for the space.*

Intellectual Health – the “**I**”

1. It’s fun to be a homeschool teacher, right? (Not so much). If this applies to you, take a deep breath. You can do this. No one remembers the last few months of 4th grade anyway. Search the internet for free classes, virtual museum tours, etc. (More ideas on **PIES for KIDS** (attached).
2. Write or record your thoughts and experiences. We are living through a once in a lifetime event. Recording our experiences can not only help us stay grounded and let go of some emotion but will create a record for the future of this challenging time.
3. **GOAL: This week I will** _____

Emotional Health – the “**E**”

1. The reality is sinking in that this is a marathon, not a sprint. Take some time to detach this week. **Stay off social media and the news for one full day** (yes, 24 hours) if possible. If that seems too long, try 8 or 12 hours. Baby steps.
2. Listen to something or watch something you find funny. **Laughter really is the best medicine.**
CHALLENGE: Complete a gratitude list (**5 things you are grateful for**) 5 out of 7 days. Be specific.
Examples: “I am grateful that I saw flowers blooming.” “I am grateful that my coffee was the perfect temperature.”

Spiritual Health – the “**S**”

1. It’s literally your job to stay calm in the midst of this chaos, it is important that you *don’t neglect yourself*. Take time **EVERY DAY** to meditate or pray. Connection to that outside ourselves is key right now.
2. *Set up a morning/wakeup routine.* EXAMPLE: 10 minutes: 1 minute to stretch and drink a glass of water, 5 minutes of prayer/meditation and 4 minutes of bodyweight exercise. **Try it.**
3. **GOAL:** My wakeup/morning routine is _____

If you’re going through Hell, keep going.” ~ Winston Churchill



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Staying Sane In Insane Times –“PIES” for Kids and Teens #1

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Physical Health – “P”

- Kids of all ages need lots of exercise. With social distancing and suggestions not to be in parks, this can get harder. **We recommend being outside (safely) as much as you can.** Inside, figure out a way to make a kid or teen friendly home workout space. **Lead by example – make a standing Quaranteam (our cute name for those you are sharing space with) workout date.** Example: **0800 – everyone up for three rounds 20 jumping jacks, 20 squats, 20 situps and 20 burpees** (modifying for level, injuries, etc.). Getting the day started with movement will set everyone on the right track. Make this non-optional. Even toddlers can dance around with the rest of the team. (Crank up the Music: Rita Wilson’s Quarantunes playlist on Spotify is great!)

Intellectual Health – “I

- **Kids are curious.** The comic below is a great resource for helping kids understand the virus. They may just learn some biology too ☺
<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>
- **Limit screen time** – We strongly suggest you have “media free” times – including older teens.
- **Routine:** children of all ages benefit from a routine: **Make a “new normal”.** Make a schedule that all can see and try to stick to it. (Don’t go too overboard though – free and unscheduled time leads to creativity.) Tip: Chalkboard contact paper. It’s a thing. Get some. Very inexpensive and can be used for daily routine schedules, notes of motivation, etc. **PRO TIP:** Daytime clothes only from 10:00 am – 7:00 pm.

Emotional Health – “E”

It is normal for children and teens to be **ALL OVER THE MAP** right now. That’s to be expected. Extra hugs and letting them know that “we are doing everything we can to stay safe and keep everyone else safe too” will help.

- Buy or create a journal where they can record their stories and drawings of their weeks at home
- Teens should be mindful of what they allow their younger siblings to see and hear regarding the current situation. (For example, if your teen decides to watch Contagion and a younger sibling sees it, allow your teen to be on “Nightmare Duty”).
- Encourage kids to connect with friends on the phone or video conference. Help younger kids with a topic list as they are likely not used to talking on the phone.

Spiritual Health – “S”

- Introduce or encourage prayer and meditation to children. Headspace has free kids meditation as do many other sites. <https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids>
- Good resource for ideas related to taking care of kids during this time.
<https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/giving/on-our-sleeves/find-help/tools-for-you/coronavirus>

“Be excellent to each other” – Bill and Ted



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Staying Sane In Insane Times - Issue #3

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Physical Health – the “**P**”

1. **Exercise: Keep on keeping on.** For this week, make a workout schedule and put it in your phone. Aim for 30 minutes of exercise every day. Remember, too, this might not be the time to be aiming for PRs. Your body is stressed from your job and all the chaos in the world. *It’s ok to be in maintenance mode.*
2. **Eye Health:** Many of us are spending much more time staring at our screens. **I highly recommend blue lights glasses which you can get online for less than \$20.** And make sure every 20 minutes you take a break from the screen and look at something at least 20 feet away for 30-60 seconds. Make it a habit to blink frequently to keep your eyes lubricated and to prevent eye strain and headaches.
GOAL: Prep healthy snacks for your patrol car or office. (Nuts, beef jerky, fresh fruit and vegetables). Cut back on the energy drinks, yes, including coffee

Intellectual Health – the “**I**”

1. Listen to a podcast or watch a show or documentary on something that you know nothing about. It can be educational, funny or mindless. *Recommendations:* Order from Chaos (funny) and Dolly Parton’s America (Very interesting listening for history and music buffs).
2. **Challenge: Learn 5 things you never knew about something or someone.**

Emotional Health – the “**E**”

1. **Make some time to “ground” yourself.** Really. Even if you don’t think you need it. Find some quiet space and do the following: Breathe for 20 seconds, slowly. Use a timer if you need to. After 20 seconds, make a mental note or say out loud the following: **5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste.** This is a simple grounding exercise that can re-orient you to the present moment, slow your breathing and calm your nervous system.
Goal: I will take time for myself on _____ by doing _____.

Spiritual Health – the “**S**”

1. **Take a moment to notice something new in your world.** Is there anything in the “new normal” that you appreciate? That you like? Can you see anything positive? **Write it down.** If not, try again until you find something. ☺ Then write that down. [If you truly can’t think of anything, just write down “less traffic.”]
2. **If you are just feeling “off”, do a quick body scan and consider the acronym HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired).** These four feelings can make us feel very “off” and generally if we can address them in the moment, our mental state can start heading the right direction. Even if we can’t immediately change our situation, understanding the basis of our feeling can allow us to know that *it will pass.*
Challenge: Check in with yourself at least once a day to notice something you like and to assesses yourself using “HALT”. Address what you can in the moment.

Perseverance and spirit have done wonders in all ages – George Washington



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Staying Sane In Insane Times –“PIES” for Kids and Teens #1

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Physical Health – “P”

1. *Physical Environment*: - **The Three Es**. Use these to start the day. Every day: 30 minutes of Education, 30 mins of Exercise and do ONE thing for the home Environment (meaning cleaning up an area, mowing the yard, planting flowers, removing clutter, etc.) **We use the 11 minute clean-up. Start a timer, turn on some music and everyone cleans up some area of the house for 11 minutes.**
2. *Card Deck Workout*. Find a deck of cards. Diamonds are jumping jacks, Spades are squats, Hearts are situps and Clubs are push-ups. Each child pulls a card and the group has to do the exercise. So, the King of Hearts is 13 situps the 2 or spades is 2 squats, etc.. To go through a whole deck takes about 20-25 minutes and there will be lots of giggles with people rooting for low numbers (*Adults: You can play along!*)

Intellectual Health – “I”

- **Share one meal together a day if possible AND make dinner conversation COVID19/virus free.** If anyone starts talking about the current situation, you might impose a penalty (perhaps monetary, or dish/clean up duty). **For a family dinner at the end of the week, have each family member create a slide show or paper presentation for ANOTHER family member to present.** You can make yours on whatever you think is interesting or funny. The presenting family member gets 30 seconds to review the presentation and then has to present to the rest. Prizes can be awarded if you like.
- **Make an “I’m BORED” jar.** (Isn’t it awesome that the schools also just happen to throw “spring break” into the mix). Find a Mason jar, shoe box or container. Have your child decorate the jar. Cut up 25 slips of paper and have your child write down ideas for when they come to you claiming “boredom.” When the time comes, pull

Emotional Health – “E”

- We are settling into a new, surreal, “normal.” This week, focus on helping **your child pick one thing daily** to look forward to. A video call with a friend, making cookies, playing outside with a sibling or you.
- *Sleep*: It’s normal to be having some difficulties sleeping right now. **A few ideas to help with sleep:** No screens/blue lights 60 minutes before bed time. Take a warm bath and drink some chamomile tea. Even young children might appreciate tea especially if served in a fancy cup. (You can water it down for the little ones).

Spiritual Health – “S”

- Children can be experiencing a lot of fear right now and it may help them to have a concrete mechanism for dealing with fear. One fun project is to create a “God Box” where they can write down or draw out their fears. **They put their paper in the box, and then they can let God worry about it for them.** (If this idea doesn’t work within your family’s spiritual ideology, you can also have your child bury the paper or with your supervision, burn it and “let it go” out to the universe to handle.)
- *Food comforts!* Cook a meal with your child and make a “tablescape”. Create a beautiful table with whatever you collect from inside and outside. Children can also make “placemats” with their drawings or an entire paper table cloth. Great website for cooks of all ages: <http://globaltableadventure.com/> This cool site has information about every country in the world along with a suggested menu.

You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think – Christopher Robin

It's all about perspective! Right now, the only thing that we can control is our attitude!





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Staying Sane In Insane Times - Issue #4

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Physical Health – the “**P**”

1. **Exercise: Dance Party in the Chicken!** A personal note here: when my daughter was a toddler, she loved to dance and she confused the words “kitchen” and “chicken” so we started having a “Dance Party in the Chicken” whenever we cooked dinner or at random times whenever we felt the need for **JOY!**. Dance is one of the best forms of exercise in that your body, mind and spirit all get involved.. So crank up some tunes and dance the night (or day) away. (There are also many “live” DJ parties on various forms of social media you may want to check out.)

Challenge: This week I will rock out to _____ (name your favorite bands).

Intellectual Health – the “**I**”

1. **Stay FACT based.** The news media thrives on sensationalism. Choose what you listen to or read wisely. Read factual data from the CDC and WHO on COVID19.
2. **Read something new.** Spend 10 minutes reading something you are interested in and know very little about. This can be a magazine article, a book, short story or blog. Examples: Celestial navigation; the history of the developing of writing instruments; How to make a souffle, etc. (You get the picture)

Goal: This week I will also read something about _____.

Emotional Health – the “**E**”

1. **Check in.** It’s been over a month now that we’ve been doing all this “new normal”. *How are you holding up?* Seriously, ask yourself. Any answer is ok. Now, take a minute to think of one thing you **REALLY** miss about the “old” way. Maybe it’s going to a movie. Maybe it’s coffee with a friend Or maybe it’s the gym. Pick one thing. *Write that down on a piece of paper and save it somewhere.* Now, take a minute to pick one thing that you **REALLY** enjoy about the present situation. Maybe more time with family. Maybe the extra time you have without a commute if you are working from home. Just one thing. **Write that down and keep that with you this week as a reminder that there is good available to us if we choose to focus on it.**

Challenge: I will find JOY at least once daily. Something that brings me joy is: _____

Spiritual Health – the “**S**”

1. **Substance Abuse and Recovery:** If you or a family member struggle with addictions or are in recovery, this can be a particularly difficult time. Most 12 step programs stress **fellowship and community which is the opposite of the social isolation** required by the COVID19 social distancing guidelines. Recovery, however, has gone online and there are thousands of 12-step meetings online around the world. *Just do a search for “Online AA meetings.” If you or someone you care about needs help, it’s free, anonymous and available 24/7.*
2. **Goal: Celebrate special holidays.** This week many people are have religious holidays. Celebrate them with family via videoconference. Yes, it can be messy and awkward with technical issues, etc. but seeing their faces will bring you and THEM joy. Set a fancy table, and celebrate. You can choose to feel joy or suffering right now. **I recommend you choose joy.**

Everything will be all right in the end. If it's not all right, it is not yet the end Best Exotic Marigold Hotel



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Staying Sane In Insane Times –“PIES” for Kids and Teens #3

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Physical Health – “P”

1. *Creating individual space.* Kids may really benefit from creating a special space within the house or their room for their “study area”. This does not need to be a permanent structure. *Get creative and let them decorate their space.*
2. *Dance for Kids:* This week I recommended a “Dance Party in the Chicken” for adults. Most kids love dancing. This week let them rock out and encourage dancing on a regular basis.

Intellectual Health – “I

- **With the news that school will be closed, your child may feel a sense of loss.** Let them acknowledge that feeling for a brief time and then help them brainstorm on how to finish the school year in a positive way. (Yes I know, this is REALLY hard on them and REALLY hard on you but remember, YOU set the example and kids will pick up YOUR energy so go have your cry in the closet or the bathroom and then pull it together.). I recommend they write a letter to their teacher and to friends. Pen Pals are making a comeback. Try it – your child will likely be thrilled to receive physical mail! ☺
- **Make an “I Miss THIS” jar.** Validate your child’s feelings that things are just not ok right now. **Find a jar and have your family members write down things that they miss and add them to this jar.** Popular choices: Hugs from friends, Going to a movie; Sports activities, etc. I suggest limiting it to 1-2 a day. When things return to “normal” we plan to draw one item from the jar every week and participate or do that activity. *(And HINT HINT: in the future when this time is behind us, this is like a Pay it Forward Gratitude Jar. These are the things and experiences that “Future Us” will cherish)*

Emotional Health – “E”

- Kids are feeling stressed out, lonely, bored and tired. At some point, when your child is in a good mood, have your child write down 10 positive emotions and 10 negative emotions. Put all the slips of paper into a bag. **Every morning, have them pick two that describe the way they are feeling.** If it’s negative, have them pick two positive emotions from the envelope and use those to help guide their day. **Put the negative ones back in the envelop and encourage them to act out their positive emotions for a bit.** NOTE: if your child continues to experience sadness, fear, hopelessness, etc. for more than a week or two, contact a mental health professional – many are offering video teletherapy for kids and adults.

Spiritual Health – “S”

- **Take it outside:** *If your child loves fantasy, the weather is getting nice enough to consider having them make a fairy garden or troll place or angel sanctuary. **Something (preferably outside) where they can use their imagination and be creative.*** If it is consistent with your spiritual beliefs, consider having the angels, fairies, etc. leave small gifts for your child, e.g. new art supplies, a book, cookies, etc.
- If you have grandparents or older relatives that may be feeling especially isolated, **consider video meetings with your child and their loved one.** Have “story time” where your child takes turns reading aloud with their relative. **Connection to others is the number one predictor of a long, happy life.** Find ways to help your child stay connected.

“Choose to be optimistic; it feels better.” – Dalai Lama



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Staying Sane In Insane Times - Issue #5

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Physical Health – the “**P**”

1. **Sleep:** As a first responder, you are likely to have sleep issues in normal times. Many departments are running different and fluctuating shifts in response to the pandemic. To function at our best, most people need *at least 7 8 hours of sleep* To assist with falling and stay asleep I recommend 1) **no blue lights or screens** of any kind for at least an hour before you want to fall asleep; 2) **Warm shower, bath or tea** really does relax the nervous system; 3) **Avoid working out less than 3 hours** before you want to sleep and 4) **try Yoga Nidra** – this is a guided relaxation technique that has been shown to be effective in first responders and military service members in promoting restful sleep. (Do an internet search for “yoga nidra” – there are plenty of free classes).
Goal: Develop a sleep routine that includes _____.

Intellectual Health – the “**I**”

1. **Ground yourself in Reality.** There is a LOT of misinformation in the news and social media about the pandemic. **Find your own favorite EVIDENCE based source on information.** Short form: *The COVID19 virus is new, there is no vaccine yet, it is probably more lethal than the flu, and the best minds in the world don't really know how it works yet.* Basically, are so many unknowns with this virus that it makes it extremely challenging from a public health perspective. **Stay based in the day to day reality of the situation you are in. Take all the precautions that you can. Consider how your choices affect those around you.** Some people’s reaction to fear is to downplay or just blow things off. That can be a protective mechanism to allow humans to do dangerous things. **Find that balance in your own head. Challenge: Consider your own internal beliefs about the virus. Ask yourself if you are in line with prevailing guidance. If not, consider why that might be? Any pros or cons to your beliefs?**

Emotional Health – the “**E**”

1. **While you are considered an “essential” worker, many of you are working from home.** This can become taxing without thoughtful planning. Consider if your style is a “work around the clock style” or if setting a hard boundary for your work hours works better. **Neither style is better** but it’s important to think about your work style and how you may unconsciously expect others to have the same style as you. So, if you are a “work around the clock” person who takes longer lunch breaks to exercise and then works later into the day/evening, you may expect others to answer your “after hours” emails or text. If your colleague is a “boundary” worker who is maintaining the more standard 9 to 5 schedule, you may wonder why they aren’t answering quickly and they may wonder why you are bothering them “after hours.”
GOAL: I will consider my work from home “style” and communicate that to _____.

Spiritual Health – the “**S**”

1. **Alcohol use:** Most treatment providers believe substance abuse stems in part from a lack of connection to *something outside ourselves.* Alcohol sales are up dramatically since the beginning of the pandemic. Alcohol is a depressant and will likely make you feel worse, not better. It can also lower your immune system. **Drinking daily and/or drinking more than 1-2 drinks a day is reason to be concerned.**
Challenge: Check in with yourself around the level of alcohol you are consuming. If it’s increased, consider if you are making the best choices for your physical and mental health. If you need help, please reach out. Help is free, anonymous and available 24/7 at AA.org.

“Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today.”– Thich Nhat Hanh



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Staying Sane In Insane Times –“PIES” for Kids and Teens #4

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Physical Health – “P”

1. **Minimize sugar.** A lot of folks have been baking since the “shelter in place” started. We are now more than a month in, so, similar to the end of the year holidays, **it’s time to reign it in.** ☺ Start monitoring the amount of sugar kids are consuming, and help them make healthier choices. *Having “treats” every night can lead to more longer term nutritional challenges.*
2. **Get outside at least once a day.** Preferably for at least 30 minutes. Go for a walk with your child and **challenge them to play a game with you where you each have to notice something new.** If your child enjoys competitive games, you can make it a contest. Anything works, a change in the bloom status of a plant, an empty street that used to be crowded, etc. This exercise can help them when they are feeling bored and is a subtle reminder of how things continue to change and evolve.

Intellectual Health – “I

- **Project Based Learning:** Take some time this week to have your child make a list of things they are interested in. *I suggest aiming for 10 -hopefully from a few different general areas of interest.* Create a folder or box (shoe boxes work) for each project idea. Depending on their age, help them search for information about their project. *At the end of each day or week, have them present their learnings on their topic of interest.*

Emotional Health – “E”

- **Build a time capsule.** Work together as family to create **a time capsule to open 10 years from now.** A plastic tub of any size will work along with some duct tape to wrap around it to keep it “sealed” until the date you pick 10 years in the future. You can hide this in your house if you don’t want to bury it. I suggest you have kids add drawings, stories, print outs of emails from teachers and friends, hard copy newspapers if you get them, etc. **Focusing on creating a time capsule together can be fun but is also a subtle way to reinforce the idea that things will get better and this will be an important time to look back on.** Kids may want to include some of their ideas from previous newsletters in this series.

Spiritual Health – “S”

- **Morning routine for kids.** Talk with your children about developing a **morning routine that includes a glass of water, some stretching and a few minutes of mindful planning for their day.** Children thrive on routine and creating a new routine can be very helpful and can be independent of whatever goes on in the outside world. Use the contact chalkboard paper I mentioned in Issue #1 for your child to write down her or his routine.
- **Ask kids to answer the following question every morning:** “What am I grateful for today? What can I create or do today that will help my family or those around me? **Continuing to foster a sense of connection will help all of us come out of this stronger and more resilient.**

"Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.

– Dumbledore



Public Safety Psychological Services

20818 44th Ave W, Suite 150, Lynnwood, WA 98036
Office (425) 775-4477, fax (425) 527-0466

Cerise M. Vablais, MBA, PhD, ABPP cvablais@psspc.net
Board Certified Specialist in Police and Public Safety Psychology

Staying Sane In Insane Times - Issue #6

This weekly tip sheet is to support you and your families during this ongoing public health event. During our annual wellness visits, using the acronym **PIES**, we discuss ideas for staying healthy and resilient. We welcome your ideas – email us at cvablais@psspc.net As always, if you or a loved one are feeling suicidal, please call “911”, Code4 Northwest or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

Physical Health – the “**P**”

- **Do LESS this week.** We are now several weeks into this ongoing situation *Most everyone I have talked to is expressing that they just feel “off” or “exhausted.” This week, do less.* I suggest only a 30 minute walk each day. No heavy lifting or setting PRs on your runs. If you practice yoga do a restorative class. If you don’t practice yoga, consider starting. Stretch, breathe, walk and just do a little bit less. **Remember, sometimes, doing nothing is doing something.**

Goal: This week, I will restore my body by _____.

Intellectual Health – the “**I**”

- **Consider the benefits of Optimism.** It is very easy right now to focus on ALL the negative things we are hearing. But, humans have survived through wars, natural disasters and other pandemics. We WILL get through this. Each day, take a minute to check in with your thoughts. **Be intentional about acknowledging that not all things are bad, that there are small things we can do to improve our daily situation and that things WILL get better.**

Challenge: When you catch yourself going into negative thinking and fear, stop, count to 10 while breathing slowly and say “*I am strong, healthy and safe in this moment. Things will get better and I am ok right now.*”

Emotional Health – the “**E**”

1. **Continuing to prepare for uncertainty.** Humans thrive with the ideas of timelines and control. Fact is that most of this situation is out of our hands. **Take a minute to acknowledge that we ARE ALL going through this. You are NOT alone.** Instead of worrying about Phase 1, Phase 2, end dates, etc. make your time frame **MUCH** shorter. What you want to do this week? Or just today? Be specific in these intentions. Planning and exercising control over the things we can control is very beneficial.

GOAL: Develop a one week plan for staying in the here and now. **Idea:** I will plant flowers in the garden on Tuesday, I will do a 30 minute walk with my kids on Friday.

Spiritual Health – the “**S**”

1. **Fellowship with others.** *What makes this situation SO hard is it makes it hard for us to be together in each other’s physical presence.* During other world events, wars, natural disasters, people were able to congregate, hug, laugh together, cry together and share a meal. Our ability to do that is currently limited – at least in the physical sense. **I strongly recommend you set up at least 3 virtual meetings a week** to connect with friends, family, or to attend a religious service. It is not the same as being in person, but it will allow you to continue to stay connected.

CHALLENGE: This week I will connect with _____

“We must accept finite disappointment but we must never lose infinite hope”. **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**



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Staying Sane In Insane Times –“PIES” for Kids and Teens #6

During our annual wellness visits, using the acronym **PIES**, we discuss ideas for staying healthy and resilient. We welcome your ideas – email us at cvablais@psspc.net As always, if you or a loved one are feeling suicidal, please call “911”, Code4 Northwest or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

Physical Health – “P”

1. **Prioritize Sleep.** As kids adjust to school and to talking to friends more online, their sleep may be disrupted. If you notice that your kids are more irritable than normal, consider their sleep patterns. ***I recommend no screens of any kind two hours before bedtime and investing in blue light blocking glasses for kids.*** Establish a firm bedtime for younger kids and encourage teens to be mindful of their bed time.
2. **Encourage kids to clean and perhaps redesign their space.** ***“Reset” your kids’ space this week.*** Most of us are heading into our second full month of shelter in place and we are using our spaces in different ways. Take inventory of your kids’ rooms and your shared spaces. Perhaps design a dedicated “home school” area or an “arts and crafts area.” And don’t worry, your house will be clean and orderly again. Someday. ***Just not right now. Give yourself and your kids the grace to treat your home as not just a home but a school, library, gym, retreat center and restaurant right now.*** (This goes for all of us right now, whether we live alone or with others.)

Intellectual Health – “I

- **Debate Society:** Siblings may be getting really fed up with being each other literally 24/7. ***Turn their arguments into an exercise in learning to argue effectively.*** Have them pick a topic and make them present one side of the argument. Then, make them present the opposite side. You can search “learning to debate” for guidelines and structure if needed. *Examples: Who should wash the dishes? Why should I put on day time clothes when I am just at home all day? Which Harry Potter House is the best and why?*
- **Family Book Club.** This month, I encourage you to start a family book club. I highly encourage reading physical (tangible) books to offset screen time. Libraries are still closed but some book stores are open for curbside pickup. Pick a book that can be read by your youngest family member or that an older sibling can read to their siblings. Pick a book club date toward the end of May and plan a special menu or snacks for your meeting. You can also extend this idea to teens and their friends with a “virtual” book club or you can invite remote family members to participate in reading and joining book club discussion at the end of the month.

Emotional Health – “E”

- **Painting/Drawing:** ***Painting and coloring has been shown to reduce stress.*** Mandala coloring can be particularly calming. I also recommend paint by number or rock painting. Supplies and coloring books for all of available for under \$20. Some neighborhoods have social media groups where people are encouraged to paint and hide rocks around the neighborhood. *Bonus: You can go on a walk and hide your rocks and look for others that have been left by others.*

Spiritual Health – “S”

- **Make an affirmation jar.** ***This week challenge your child to write down at least 1-2 positive thoughts or affirmations every day.*** An example is “I am strong, I am brave, I am kind.” Or “All of my problems have solutions.” Find a jar or box (that they can decorate) to store their affirmations. After they have finished, let them pull one affirmation a day and encourage them to write a paragraph or two on the meaning of that affirmation for them.

“The flower that blooms in adversity is the rarest and most beautiful of all.” ~Shiamin Kwa, [Mulan](#)