



## Public Safety Psychological Services

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### Staying Sane In Insane Times – “Gratitude”

*Noun “the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness”*

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](mailto:cvablais@psspc.net) As always, if you or a loved one are feeling suicidal, please call “911”, Code4NW at 425-243-5092 or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

#### Physical Health – the “**P**”

**Give thanks for all that you can do with your body.** Our bodies allow us to move in the world. This week, take a step back and be grateful for your health. Even with challenges, limitations and illness, if you are reading these newsletters, you can express gratitude for another day. Consider it an opportunity to enjoy the physical health that you do have.

**Goal: Pick something difficult to do – Perhaps lift a slightly heavier weight, work on a balance exercise, run a little bit farther, or maybe just sit still for 5 minutes without distraction. This week, try to make progress toward your goal. When you are done, be grateful that your body allowed you to complete this exercise.**

#### Intellectual Health – the “**I**”

**Think about a list of all the things that you truly enjoy or want to do.** When we spend time involved in activities that we enjoy, it’s easier to be grateful. This week, make a list of all things you want to do. *Include personal time* as well as family time, exercise, house projects, work projects. Examine the list and decided which things might make you feel calmer (and probably grateful when you are done!)

**Challenge: Pick one or two things that you really want to do this week and DO THEM. (This can be little, like go to your favorite coffee shop or spend 30 minutes reading a great book).**

#### Emotional Health – the “**E**”

**Consider feeding gratitude instead of pity.** Right now, many of us are faced with unique challenges due to the continued effects of the pandemic. But you have a choice on what you feed. If you consider the things that happen to you during the day, notice your reactions to them and choose what to “feed.” Example: You are faced with negative citizen interactions but you also have someone who says thank you. You can choose to focus on the negative (a form of self-pity) or you can focus on the positive. (Gratitude). You get to decide ☺.

**Goal: At the end of each day, consider what went well and what didn’t. Chose to be grateful for the good things and forget the not so great things.**

#### Spiritual Health – the “**S**”

**Make gratitude a daily practice.** There are countless studies showing us that practicing gratitude daily can shift our mindset to a more positive place. This week, begin to “bookend” your days with gratitude. These little shifts, when practiced regularly can improve your overall sense of well-being.

**Challenge: Start your day with naming, writing down or saying aloud, two unique things that are you are grateful for. These should be specific (e.g. I love the color of the fall leaves that are outside my window). At the end of the day, identify two more things or events that occurred during your day that you are grateful for.**

*When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.” – Willie Nelson*



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

**Gratitude** *“the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness”*

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#### Physical Health – “P”

- **Play and dance.** As we all know children need MOVEMENT. This week, help them develop gratitude for their bodies by getting them up and moving. *Help them doing something that is a little bit challenging or have them work together in teams to do something that they couldn't do alone.* When they are finished, talk with them about being grateful that they have a healthy body to move and play.

#### Intellectual Health – “I

- **Express gratitude for learning.** Many kids are still in virtual school with mixed results and reactions. *This week, take 10 minutes and talk to your child about what they are learning.* Talk about being thankful to their teachers and to you for helping them navigate this challenging, imperfect learning environment. For the 10 minutes, try (very hard) to only focus on what is working well. And ask your child if there is anything that they like or have learned during this time that surprised them. Express gratitude for these unexpected gifts.

#### Emotional Health – “E”

- **Which wolf will you feed?.** In many courses related to gratitude that I've attended, a version of a Native story is shared. It goes something like this: *“An old man is teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy. “It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.” He goes on to say, “The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.” The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?” **The old Man simply replied, “The one you feed.** Read this story to your children and talk about it. Help them decide which wolf to feed.*

#### Spiritual Health – “S”

- **Bookending days with gratitude.** Children can benefit greatly from beginning to practice gratitude at a young age. (Never too early to start!). Ask them their thoughts about what being thankful for means and what they are thankful for. *Start encouraging a habit of starting and ending their days with just a brief moment of thanks for all that they have and are.* Encourage them to identify specific things that they are grateful for. (Back in Season 1 of this newsletter, I suggested decorating a gratitude jar – this might be a good time to open the jar, or, if you haven't yet, creating one.)

*“I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers.” – Anne of Green Gables*