

## Important Self-Care Reminders

Adapted from resident communication written by  
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*“To succeed, you need to find something to hold on to,  
to motivate you, something to inspire you.”~ Tony Dorsett*

For many of us, the key to maintaining (or improving) our mental well-being during this Covid-19 pandemic is finding that one thing, that “light at the end of the tunnel,” that motivates us to get up and keep going. We all know that people handle stressful situations differently. Some people tackle the challenge head on, jumping right in. Some are more thoughtful and analytical. Others are hesitant and unsure. For many, our ability to handle the situation will change. We will have good days and bad days. That’s a given.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) website, during a pandemic we can experience a wide array of reactions. Some of the reactions they cite that may cause us fear, anxiety or worry include:

- Fear over our own health status;
- Anxiety over the health status of our loved ones;
- Feeling overwhelmed by monitoring others or ourselves for signs or symptoms of COVID-19;
- Fear over securing things that we need;
- Uncertainty about how long the situation will last;
- Loneliness associated with feeling cut off from our loved ones and society;
- Anger at being exposed because of other’s negligence;
- Boredom and frustration because we may not be able to engage in our typical day to day activities; and/or
- Symptoms of depression, such as feelings of hopelessness, changes in appetite, or sleeping too little or too much.

Once we give what we are feeling a “voice,” it somehow becomes easier to take steps to overcome. We can give voice to our struggles by talking to a trusted individual; writing a letter to ourselves, God or even Santa Claus (as humor is sometimes a helpful tool); through meditation or prayer; journaling; or using a stress management app on our phone.

*With a little self-care, we can all ...*

SAMHSA also identifies other ways in which we can support ourselves during the COVID-19 outbreak. Their website shares the following additional suggestions:

- Stay up to date on what is happening with COVID-19, while also limiting your exposure to media. Watching the media 24/7 can increase our anxiety and fear. Look to credible resources, such as the Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization or the Ohio Department of Health, for information. It's all about balance.
- Be your own advocate and educate yourself.
- Connect with others. We may need to stretch outside our comfort zones and try new virtual methods of connecting, such as Skype, FaceTime or Zoom.
- Talk to your doctor or health care professionals.
- Use practical, simple, ways to cope or relax. These could include relaxing your body by stretching or taking deep breaths.
- Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking.

The Ohio Department of Health has a COVID-19 checklist on their website. The checklist emphasizes the benefits of a schedule which can offer us a “sense of stability, security and structure.” For some of us, we are still working and able to keep our normal schedules. For others, our schedules have been disrupted and changed dramatically. The information below is offered for those days when your “normal” schedule is anything but that.

- Create a daily schedule. Write it down and check things off as you complete them. Schedule something at least every hour.
- Establish times for waking up, meals and snacks, going to bed and sleeping.
- Get ready for the day—bathe or shower, brush your teeth, and get dressed. Do NOT wear your pajamas all day. It may be tempting, but also limiting.
- Set start and end times for your activities.

In addition, make sure everyone in your household gets some alone time. We all love those that we live with, but alone time is also instrumental to our mental well-being.

**Remember, you always have access to our Employee Assistance Program which includes counseling as needed. Learn more at:**

<http://www.cignabehavioral.com/CGI>.