

MHA offers tips to combat the stress of COVID-19

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Special to Treasure Coast Newspapers
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

VERO BEACH -- Stress! Anxiety! Depression! These are just some of the side effects we are all dealing with during this COVID-19 pandemic.

The emotions that accompany this "new normal" way of life can be very challenging. Fortunately, our community has help. The Mental Health Association in Indian River County has been treating these symptoms every day for the last 60 years. Stress is not only caused by a pandemic, but also by a loss of a job, loss of a loved one, divorce, fear, a violent experience, and the list goes on -- but the MHA offers solutions.

We want our community to know that we are still open to serve those who need our help! You can still come to the MHA Walk-In & Counseling Center to get a mental health screening, without an appointment, at no charge.

However, if you are like most people and following the government's suggestions to isolate, we have plenty of at-home stress relieving suggestions to help you through this crisis.

We first want to share the CDC (Center for Disease Control) website where you can find a wealth of information to stay safe and healthy, both physically & mentally. Visiting www.cdc.gov is your first stop if you are feeling sick, providing you with the most up-to-date guidance to follow.

As far as staying physically healthy, everyone seems to agree to the following:

■ **Be kind to your body** -- drink plenty of water and eat healthy, nutritious foods.

■ **Stay active** -- walk around your neighborhood, take a bike ride, attend a free aerobics class on YouTube or get a work out app.

■ **Get plenty of rest** -- Stress can drain you. Make sure to get a full 8-9 hours of sleep. A 20-30 minute nap has proven to help the brain focus and provide more energy for the second half of the day.

■ **Try Yoga & meditation** -- a simple 1-minute breathing exercise can calm and recharge your brain for hours. There are multitudes of apps to get you started: SmilingMind, The Mindfulness App, Stop, Breathe & Think, InsightTimer.

As far as our mental health goes, we are lucky to live in the techno age with a plethora of stress-relieving options available to us at the touch of a finger. Again, there are so many free Apps available to inspire you throughout the

Additional resources

Below are some additional resources for those in need. Please consider sharing this information with loved ones and family members.

■ If you or someone you know is in crisis, please call 911, go to the nearest emergency room, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a 24-hour crisis center, or text MHA to 741741 at the Crisis Text Line. Online chat is also available at

■ The national Disaster Distress Helpline (call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746) offers 24/7 emotional support & if you have any medical concerns speak to a trusted healthcare provider.

■ Toll-free statewide Florida Warm Line 1-800-945-1355 4:00 PM - 10:00 PM EST Every night of the year including holidays.

■ Information on virtual Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) Meetings too. For more information, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/FOBzoom>.

■ AA Intergroup Online Meetings are available here: <https://www.aa-intergroup.org/directory.php>

■ Information regarding how to use the zoom app to attend and host meetings is available here: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697>

■ "In the Rooms" Global Recovery Network is available here: <https://www.intherooms.com/home>

■ To access the My Strength community, please click on the following link: <https://app.mystrength.com/signup/>. Use the access code: SEFBHNFriends.

■ Peer-to-peer support group for those coping with fear and stress associated with various anxiety disorders. <https://support.therapytribe.com/anxiety-support-group/>

■ Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA)'s anonymous peer-to-peer online anxiety and depression support group (now with more than 20,000 subscribers from around the world) is a friendly, safe and supportive place for individuals and their families to share information and experiences. As a member you can connect with other people experiencing anxiety and depression and related disorders, contribute to ongoing conversations or start your own conversation with a question or a post about your journey. <https://adaa.org/adaa-online-support-group>

■ Ekhart Yoga. is offering free yoga and meditation classes. Free online yoga & meditation classes. We'd love to support anyone directly affected - physically or emotionally - by the coronavirus outbreak. 12 free yoga and meditation classes, specifically designed to help relieve stress and anxiety. 100% free, no payment details required.

day & help relieve stress and anxiety. Check out some of our favorites; ThinkUp, Fabulous, Motivate, Calm, Motivation.

Not a "techy"? No worries. There are plenty of ways to stay healthy and active while keeping your mind focused on positive thoughts.

■ **Limit your live TV viewing** -- especially news, talk shows, etc. Stay informed but don't become addicted to current news.

■ **Interact with your family** -- Get your kids involved with cooking and baking. Have a family game night of playing UNO, Yahtzee, card games, or any other game you prefer. Bring back family dinner at the table and come up with interesting topics to talk about instead of COVID-19.

■ **Start some home projects or crafts** -- paint a room or a wall a new happy color. Plant some flowers or veggies in your garden. Start a puzzle that all family members can join in periodically. There are so many options to purchase these items via the internet now. Head to Amazon, Walmart.com, and Target.com and have something fun delivered to provide hours of entertainment.

■ **Take a drive** -- go along the coast or drive around the town of Vero Beach to participate in our Turtle Scavenger Hunt. Details on our website.

This is an unusual and uncomfortable time for all of us. However, you can use

this time to start some new traditions. Embrace this extra time to regroup and enjoy your family.

This will not last forever and soon you will be begging to have this time back. Make the most of it. However, if your anxiety or negative feelings start to overwhelm you, please know that the MHA is here for you and most importantly, you are not alone. It's Okay to Get

Help!

As a 501c3, the MHA cannot keep its doors open without donations. Now, more than ever, we ask for your support so we can continue to provide help to those who need it most during these troubling times.

Please visit www.mhairc.org to donate or call us at 772-569-9788. Follow us on Facebook for daily inspiration.

VERO BEACH | INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Newsweekly

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Distributed every week throughout Vero Beach, Sebastian and Indian River County.

Visit us on the web at www.tcpalm.com

The Vero Beach Newsweekly is located at 2066 14th Ave., Suite 200, Vero Beach, FL 32960.

Published by TREASURE COAST NEWSPAPERS | TC.PALM.COM COPYRIGHT © 2018 Vero Beach, Florida