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PRESS RELEASE

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Stay Safe, Stay Positive, Stay Mentally Healthy During COVID-19

"We need to be thoughtful and intentional about our own mental health by maintaining routines as much as possible," says Strite

Carlisle, PA – As we continue managing our lives through the COVID-19 Pandemic; we need to stay safe, stay positive and stay mentally healthy. Cumberland and Perry Counties' Mental Health and Intellectual Development Disabilities (MH.IDD) encourages residents to be intentionally aware of stress, and its effect on their mental health.

"Working from home, parenting, helping our children with their education, or losing a job has placed additional stress on our families, and can add mental strain on most of us," said Annie Strite, MH.IDD Administrator and Mental Health Director. "To maintain our own wellbeing, we need to be thoughtful and intentional about our own mental health by maintaining our routines as much as possible."

What to do:

- **Take care of you, first:** Get at least 7-8 hours of sleep. Then you'll be able to help others.
- **Drink plenty of water:** Adequate hydration is imperative to maintain a clear head, and keep our bodies detoxing from daily doses of heightened stress during this situation.
- **Exercise:** Take a walk, do some stretches, or yoga. Our bodies will naturally try to detoxify from the added stress.
- **Reach out:** Call or text a friend, talk and laugh, laughter is a wonderful tool to help stay positive and hopeful for the future.
- **Help Out:** If you have older parents or neighbors, help them by getting their groceries or send a card to let them know you are thinking of them.
- **Spend extra quality time with family and children:** As parents and caregivers, we model behavior for our kids. Our children can tell when we are excessively stressed. Tell them why, for now, it's important to stay home and maintain contact using other tools such as on-line platforms.
- **Get help::** Experiencing significant changes to normal behaviors and daily patterns of life, like inability to sleep, increased uncontrollable crying, increased smoking, increased alcohol use, irritability, feeling suicidal, or violent – call a provider.
- **Disconnect::** Go electronic free; even if it's for an hour

What to Avoid:

- **Drinking too much:** Avoid excess caffeine and alcohol.
- **Sugar:** It impacts mental health. When we over consume sugar we have increased anxiety, and excess sugar has been linked to depression.
- **Excess stress:** It can exacerbate the symptoms of mental illness.
- **Being hard on yourself:** Working from home and managing children is quite different during a pandemic. Try being patient with what can be accomplished.
- **Panicking:** Stay positive. Take it one day at time. Do what you can to stay safe.

Cumberland and Perry Counties' Mental Health Services are operating. Residents not in crisis, but feeling alone or isolated, consider calling the Warmline at 1.877.243.7153 and talk with our trained staff.

Crisis intervention is available 24/7 at Geisinger Holy Spirit Hospital at 717.763.2222, or UPMC Carlisle, at 717.243.6005.

For more information, contact [Cumberland & Perry Counties' MH.IDD](mailto:MH.IDD@ccpa.net) at 717.240.6320.

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Cumberland County is the fastest growing county in the Commonwealth and offers the perfect mix of small town, suburban and rural living. Established in 1750, Cumberland County consistently maintains one of the lowest tax and unemployment rates in the state, while providing exceptional services for its more than 250,000 residents. More information on Cumberland County can be found at www.ccpa.net.