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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Signs of Mental Health Concerns and Resources for Coping with COVID-19

May 22, 2020 – May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and there has never been a more crucial time to address mental health concerns, as many are experiencing new or worsening mental health due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. The disruption of daily life has caused an increase in mental health concerns around the world. This disruption and additional stressors has exacerbated pre-existing mental health concerns and lead to concerns for those who have never experienced them. Having difficulty during this time is normal, and we strongly encourage anyone experiencing distress, big and small, to reach out. It is important to remember there is help and hope available for anyone.

Watch for signs of mental health concerns in yourself and your loved ones. These include:

- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.
- Excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt
- Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate
- Extreme mood swings
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Significant tiredness or low energy
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares
- Obsessive thoughts and images
- Major changes in eating habits
- Detachment from reality (delusions), paranoia or hallucinations
- Trouble understanding and relating to situations and to people
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, numb or tingling limbs, stomach problems and skin rashes
- Anger, irritation or violence
- Suicidal thoughts

If you experience these feelings or behaviors for several days in a row, seek professional help. If you feel like you want to harm yourself or others, or if someone you know shows signs of these desires, call 911.

Practicing good self-care can relieve some of the stress associated with COVID-19. Making a few small changes to your routine can improve your overall mood and well-being. If you are experiencing mental health concerns, these changes should accompany seeking professional help.

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Ideas for staying healthy and reducing stress:

- Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Exercise regularly to reduce feelings of anxiety and depression.
- Practice relaxation therapy.
- Let more sunlight in. Increased exposure to light can improve symptoms of depression.
- Stay connected to friends, family and neighbors with phone calls, text messages, video chats and social media. Share what you are feeling and offer to listen to others' feelings.
- It's difficult to find anything unrelated to COVID-19 on the Internet or on the news these days, which can be overwhelming. Balance the time you spend online or watching TV with other activities you enjoy, such as reading, cooking or listening to music.

Local Resources for Help

CGH Ways to Wellness, a partnership with Sinnissippi Centers, is offering free phone counseling call 815-625-4790 ext. 1916 or 815-440-3574 to schedule an appointment.

Whiteside County Community Health Clinic offers Behavioral Health appointments over the phone and in person, including its Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Program for opiate addiction. Call 815-626-2230 to schedule a phone visit.

CGH Medical Centers and Ready Care are offering CGH Telehealth video appointments. Call 815-625-0400, or your CGH provider's office, to ask about scheduling a Telehealth appointment.

Sinnissippi Centers of Sterling is offering phone, video and limited in-person behavioral health appointments. Call 800-242-7642. If you are in crisis or have any urgent behavioral health needs, call their 24-hour crisis line at 800-242-7642. They also provide [links to resources](#) on a variety of topics related to COVID-19.

The YWCA Domestic Violence Program offers a 24-hour Hotline run by trained professionals. Call 211 or the YWCA of the Sauk Valley at 815-626-7277 or 815-288-1011. The program also offers legal advocacy, medical advocacy, shelter, economic support, counseling and children's services.

Call4Calm Illinois free-of-charge, anonymous emotional support text line for residents experiencing stress and mental health issues related to COVID-19. Text "TALK" for English, or "HABLAR" for Spanish, to 552020. Text 552020 with key words such as "unemployment" or "food" or "shelter" to receive info on local support and services.



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Dial 2-1-1 Assistance finding food, paying for housing bills, accessing free childcare, or other essential services. Visit 211.org or call 211 to speak to someone who can help.

Resources For Immediate Response

- [SAMHSA Disaster Distress Hotline](#)
 - Crisis counseling and support for anyone in the U.S. experiencing distress or other behavioral health concerns related to any natural or human-caused disaster, including public health emergencies. Call 1-800-985-5990/ TTY: 1-800-846-8517 or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746.
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)
 - Free, 24/7, confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255).
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)
 - Support for victims and survivors of domestic violence. Call 1-800-799-7233 or 1-800-799-7233 for TTY. If you are unable to speak safely, go to thehotline.org or text LOVEIS to 22522.
- [The Trevor Project](#)
 - A national 24-hour, toll free confidential suicide hotline for LGBTQ youth. Call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678678.
- [Trans Lifeline](#)
 - A peer support service run by trans people, for trans and questioning callers. Call 877-565-8860.
- [The National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline](#)
 - Support for victims and survivors of sexual assault. Call 800.656.HOPE (4673) to be connected with a trained staff member from a sexual assault service provider in your area.
- [Caregiver Help Desk](#)
 - Access to caregiving experts from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET. Call 855-227-3640.

As a reminder we are all going through this experience together, no one is alone, and help is available.

For general questions about COVID-19 call IDPH's COVID-19 hotline at 1-800-889-3931. Additional information is also available on the [Illinois Coronavirus](#) and [CDC COVID-19](#) websites.

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