

# COVID-19 Information Collaboration

*Building Strength, Courage, and Resilience, through the Pandemic*

Local Support Line: (817)-579-4483 | Email: TRT@pecanvalley.org | Texas COVID-19 24/7 Support Line: (833)-986-1919



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## Greetings from the CCP!!

*Written by Madalyn Cano, MSSW, LMSW*

Happy New Year! We are really pleased to be able to share information about this terrific program. The ***Texans Recovering Together Crisis Counseling Program*** is funded through a grant to support the mental health and stress management needs of individuals in our communities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our services are **FREE and CONFIDENTIAL**. We will not share any personal identifying information and there is no eligibility criteria. This program is different than what most people might be used to, as there is no need for a diagnosis, and we hope that helps members of our communities move past any perceived stigma in reaching out for brief, solution-focused support during these tough times. The TRT/CCP through Pecan Valley Centers has a ***multi-disciplinary team of trained counselors*** who are ready to provide individual and group counseling and resource referrals for any number of needs. We understand that no matter who you are, what your situation is, we are here to help you – even if it's just a regular phone call to check in, or if it's assisting you through action plan for immediate needs. In some cases, we are meeting with students in schools to help with anxiety and depression; in other cases we are visiting elderly in their homes, or meeting with first responders and business leaders on self-care strategies for their workforce. I hope you find this information helpful. Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions: call **817-579-4483** or email **trt@pecanvalley.org**.

~ Blessings, Madalyn Cano, Program Manager

## 2021: New Year, New Opportunities

Written by Jamie Pytlik, BSW



For many, the countdown to the new year began early... maybe even back in the summer, when we all started to realize that the pandemic was not coming to an end anytime soon. Now that 2021 is here, many of us are celebrating the end of a year that brought pain and turmoil, and looking forward to a new beginning, a clean

state, and hope for a better tomorrow. While the strike of the clock at midnight on December 31st, or the drop of the traditional new years ball in Times Square do not automatically promise an ending to the stress, loss, and unrest we became all too familiar with in 2020, it does give way to new opportunities. In 2021, we will have new opportunities to engage in social connectedness in creative ways like never before. We will have new opportunities to foster resilience and develop a level of adaptivity needed to not only survive, but prosper, in the days to come. Life is not about waiting for the rainbow after a season of storms. Instead, we should learn to dance in the rain. In 2021, may we learn to dance in the strongest of storms, and celebrate the rays of sunlight that peak through the clouds. The storm may not come to an end in 2021, but in this new year, we certainly have new opportunities to make the best of it.

## Senior Support: New Ways to Engage with the Elderly during the Pandemic

Written by Natalie Gore, BSW

As we know, 2020 took a severe toll on the mental health of our senior population, due to being so vulnerable to COVID-19. As we begin 2021 with a sense of new hope, there are still ways to engage and communicate with seniors while also protecting their health. We can anticipate seeing more technology that will allow people to stay connected to friends, families, and their communities. Any senior who has a cell phone with a camera can use apps such as Facebook and WhatsApp to video conference at any time. Also, with products such as Google Home, Alexa from Amazon, and Siri from Apple, a simple voice command can instantly send calls, text, or email to contacts. Seniors should also make a daily goal

of walking, dancing, or swimming for at least 10 minutes. This is a great way to ease stress and feel better to combat isolation. Source: Caring Places Management (2020) [1]



## Children and Youth: New Ways to Connect with Your Children Through Play

Written by CallieAnn Simpson, BSW



The COVID-19 pandemic in many ways has allowed our society, including our children, to become disconnected and isolated. It is especially important during this time that our children feel connected, loved, cared for, and nurtured. One way to achieve this is to play with your children. The late Dr. Karen Purvis, founder of the Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) says, “Play disarms fear, builds connectedness, and teaches social skills and competencies for life”. Play has been described as children’s love language and allows for their cognitive, social, and emotional growth. While we all have busy lives, it can be hard to find the time and ways to connect with your children. Below are some tips to be most successful!

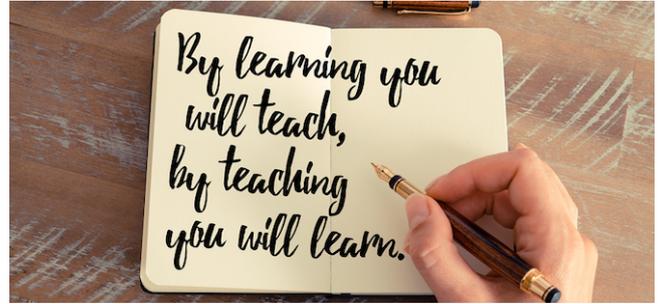
- Schedule the time to play with your child.
- Let your child guide the play, get into their world!
- Be present with your child while playing with them, minimize distractions.
- Have fun and connect!

Source: Parris & Hernandez (2020) [2]

## Teacher to Teacher: New Ways to Stay Inspired

*Written by Shelley Scheuren BS, Special Education*

Health professionals believe that 80-90% of all disease is stress related. Add COVID-19 and new regulations and requirements and soon, stress is dominating your outlook as a teacher. Managing stress and maintaining a positive outlook is key to retaining beginning of the year optimism! Replace negative thoughts with positive ones. Negative self-talk can take hold and direct your choices and life outcomes. If you want positive outcomes, develop positive thoughts. If you are constantly thinking you can't, then achievement will be hindered. Have you ever bought a car and then you see that same model of car everywhere? Writing about and focusing on joyful, happy thoughts work the same way. So find your joy!!! Make a list of joyful, happy things. Have Faith. A strong correlation



exists between faith, hope and positive mental health. Visit a virtual calm room. (link at bottom) Research-based ways of handling stress include meditation, deep breathing, aromatherapy, listening to music, visualization and prayer.

**Virtual Calm Room:** <https://ccprelaxation.org/>

## Healthy Connections: You're Strong, You've Got This!

*Written by Andrea Carmack, M.Ed.*



**Resiliency—the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.**

Life may not come with a personalized road map; everyone will experience twists and turns, from everyday life challenges to traumatic events, like the death of a

loved one, a life-altering accident, a serious illness, or uncertainty about the future... Each change affects people differently--- bringing a unique flood of thoughts, strong emotions, and feelings of uncertainty. People have the innate capacity to adapt to life-changing and stressful situations—in part thanks to resiliency.

Just in case you haven't been reminded lately...you are strong; you've got this! There is a Proverb- "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."

So what are you 'thinking in your heart', i.e.---What is your self-talk? (Those subtle thoughts barely above the level of consciousness, that scream so loudly it's deafening.) It's okay to stop and exam, even question your self-talk— "Is this true Are these thoughts working for me? Do I enjoy these feelings?" Then change the thoughts to match the true you before the difficulties occurred. You are strong, you've got this!

## Resource Connection: New CCP Projects in 2021!

*Written by Erin Stroebel Holstein, BS Criminal Justice*

As a CCP team, we are doing big things for 2021! We have been able to partner with various agencies and programs to better assist our communities. Some of our projects that are in the works include connecting the senior population that are in senior care facilities to the elementary schools. With this project, the seniors will be able to read to a class, have a pen pal, teach history lessons, etc. Through this project, we can provide support to seniors that have been isolated since the onset of COVID 19, and we are also able to assist the schools in our communities. The CCP is also continuing to work in the schools, through presentations on various topics, assisting students, parents, and staff, and developing support groups within the schools to provide coping skills and stress

A blue banner with white and red text. At the top, it says 'Need to talk?' in white on a red background. Below that, in large white letters, it says 'WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.' Underneath, it says 'FREE COVID-19 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT' in white. A red box contains the phone number '(817)-579-4483'. At the bottom, it says '#TEXANSRECOVERINGTOGETHER' in white. On the right side, there is a logo for 'TEXANS RECOVERING TOGETHER' with a Texas state outline and the text 'CRISIS COUNSELING ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING PROGRAM'.

management to students. Texans Recovering Together is also working on a Suicide Survivor Support group in Palo Pinto county, an employment readiness group for probationers, various presentations on PTSD, anxiety, and much more! For more information on the projects the CCP is implementing, or if there is anything we can do to help your community, please reach out to us!

# Special Populations: Code 10-96! How's Your Mental Health Lately?

Written by Aaron Zamora, BS, Psychology



First responders are the first ones in and most times, the last ones out, whether it be a call to serve and protect, brave uncontrolled fires, or save civilian lives. The job requires tremendous amounts of dedication. Due to the nature of the job, it can sometimes take an emotional strain on an individual. The uncertainty of the pandemic and political unrest has uprooted our foundation and given rise to anxiety levels. The occasional anxiety is expected from time to time; however, when it left unkept it has the potential to impact one's daily life. First responders are susceptible to anxiety disorders, such as General Anxiety Disorder,

Social Anxiety Disorder and Panic Disorder. These mental health concerns are usually characterized by intense and persistent fear, nervousness, or apprehension. The aforementioned disorders can cause hesitation or increase emotions in critical moments. Anxiety can also impact one outside of work by causing everyday activities to become stressful and overwhelming. When high levels of anxiety are left unmanaged, it has the potential to manifest into physical symptoms of infection, heart disease, and alcohol and substance abuse. Some quick things to look out for shift in mood, feelings of unrest, excessive worrying, irritability, muscle tension, prolonged sleep disruption. If you find yourself experiencing some of these signs or symptoms, Texans Recovering Together is here to support you. You can reach out the CCP to be connected with a trained crisis counselor, who can provide free and confidential support to assist you through these feelings. Sources: International Association of Firefighters (2021) [4]; Warriors Heart (2019) [5]

## Texans Recovering Together Crisis Counseling Program is here to support you through COVID-19!

Need support? Scan our QR Code and fill out the online form to be connected with a trained crisis counselor!

### Contact Information:

Local Referral Line: (817)-579-4483  
Email: TRT@pecanvalley.org  
Texas COVID-19 24/7 Support Line: (833)-986-1919  
Pecan Valley 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (800)-772-5987



### References

#### New Year, New Opportunities

Image: Canva

#### Senior Support: New Ways to Engage with the Elderly during the Pandemic

[1] Caring Places Management. (2020). Actionable and healthy resolutions for seniors. Retrieved from <https://www.caringplaces.com/actionable-and-healthy-resolutions-for-seniors/>

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#### Children and Youth: New Ways to Connect with Your Children Through Play

[2] Parris, S. & Hernandez, C. (2020). The benefits of play in cognitive development. Retrieved from <https://child.tcu.edu/play/#sthash.SwyJyfrV.dpbs>

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#### Teacher to Teacher: New Ways to Stay Inspired

Image: Middleweb. (2016). 6 ways teachers can stay inspired this year. [Image]. Retrieved from <https://www.middleweb.com/31306/6-ways-teachers-can-stay-inspired-this-year/>

#### Healthy Connections: You're Strong, You've Got This!

Image: Canva

#### Resource Referrals: New CCP Projects in 2021!

Image: Created by the Texans Recovering Together Crisis Counseling Program.

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[4] International Association of Firefighters. (2021). Signs of anxiety. Retrieved from <https://www.iaffrecoverycenter.com/behavioral-health/anxiety/>

[5] Warriors Heart. (2019). Addiction and PTSD treatment for police officers and law enforcement. Retrieved from <https://www.warriorheart.com/law-enforcement/>

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