



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



Highlights from November:

- Greetings- 1
- Foster Care & Adoption- 2
- Senior Support- 2
- Children and Youth-2
- Teacher to Teacher- 3
- Healthy Connections- 3
- Resource Referrals- 3
- Special Populations- 4
- About the CCP- 4
- References-4

Greetings from the CCP!!

Written by Madalyn Cano, MSSW, LMSW

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

Adoption and Trauma: Healing the Hurt Child

Written by Cindi Lopez, M.Ed., LPC

November is

National Adoption month

Trauma is an emotional response to an intense event that threatens or causes harm. However, by definition, trauma occurs when a stressful experience overwhelms the child's natural ability to cope. For most children in the foster care system who've experienced trauma, how bad and how often it happened influences how significant the impact will be on them. Many children in foster care are placed for adoption due to parental

rights being terminated. The goal of adoption is to provide children with their forever families which will begin the process of helping heal the hurt child. November has been deemed National Adoption Day. This day is observed annually on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. The goal of National Adoption Day is to provide forever families to as many children as possible. This event is focused on raising awareness of children in foster care waiting to be adopted. Since the inception of National Adoption Day, more than 54,000 children have moved from foster care to their forever homes. In the United States, there are more than 100,000 children in foster care. To learn more about foster care and adoption, click on the link below.http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/adoption_and_foster_care/about_tare/adoption/default.asp

Senior Support: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Written by Latisha Melton, MSW, & Natalie Gore, BSW

It is commonly known that it takes a village to raise a child and, in some cases, this happens in formal legal proceedings for the safety of the child. Kinship Care in the foster care world is when a family member takes guardianship of a child whose parent is unable to be guardian for the time being. Approximately 2.7 million children are being raised by friend or family members when their family no longer can (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services [DFPS], 2019). Kinship care for relatives and grandparents can be beneficial for them as well as the child or children in their care. Research has shown that a child who is able to live with a grandparent or family members are more successful growing into adulthood. This arrangement minimizes trauma, improves wellbeing, improves their mental and behavioral outcomes, allows siblings to stay together, and nurtures the child's cultural identity (DFPS, 2019). Many grandparents gain solace in knowing that by raising their grandchildren they can remain involved

with the family. According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) there are many resources available to help finance a grandparent in raising their grandchildren. If you or someone you know is a kinship care provider and are having extra stressors due to COVID-19, please reach out to Texans Recovering Together Crisis Counseling Program and we will get you the support you need (Goyer, n.d.).



Children and Youth: Recognizing Trauma in Children

Written by Erin Stroebel, BS, Criminal Justice, & Jamie Pytlik, BSW



Recognizing trauma in children is important not only when working with children, but also if you plan to have children of your own or adopt! COVID-19 can be very traumatic for children of all ages, and reactions can be different depending on the age of the child impacted. For younger children, signs of trauma might look like crying, screaming, or changes in sleep. For older children,

trauma can look like isolation, depression, struggling with schoolwork, moody or disruptive behavior, and losing interest in friends or activities. To help your child cope with these reactions it is important to take care of yourself first. Children notice when their parents or caregivers are stressed, and this can impact the way they cope with their own reactions. Addressing trauma in children can be done many ways, and here are a few ways to do so:

- Rebuild their trust and safety
- Limit the media that your children are exposed to
- Practice normal activities with your children
- Eat healthy, and get exercise

If symptoms become worse, it is important to seek professional help.

Teacher to Teacher: Self-Care

Written by Jennifer Sims, BS, Education

Start with you. Educators are notorious for giving themselves fully to their families and students, ignoring their own needs and health, using their personal resources for their classroom, taking on more responsibility when asked before thinking it through, and willing to do without. We are caretakers. It's who we are and it's how we are built. They need us. Their need for us is why it's absolutely necessary to be self-aware. We, as educators, create a safe, consistent and stable environment. If we are not safe, consistent and stable ourselves, we will leave it all on the field and we won't stay in the game long and compassion fatigue will set in. Compassion fatigue comes when someone is exposed to the trauma and stress of others over time, and it includes



exhaustion and even burnout. Self-care is something that educators need to explore and find a way to include in their day. Self care looks different for everyone, but one non-negotiable activity is health care. Take care of yourself by eating well and exercising, seeking out fun activities, taking a pause during the day, finding time to self-reflect, allowing yourself to cry, and finding things to laugh about.

Healthy Connections: Memories Become Heart Treasures

Written by Andrea Carmack, M.Ed.

*The greatest legacy
we can leave our children is
happy memories.*

Memories become heart treasures... taking time to make them, brings meaning amid mundane and a sense of stability in times of uncertainty. Too often today becomes the yesterday, that became a week, month, year...we blink and our children have grown and time feels like sand slipping through our fingers; let's embrace the adage-- carpe diem--seize the day! Take some time this holiday season to make "heart treasures" with loved ones. Here are some simple ideas for making meaningful holiday memories with family and friends:

- Holiday movie night with popcorn (or while stringing popcorn): an addition would be to give each child their own "movie night box" with new pj's, holiday mug, packet of coco, holiday movie, stuffed animal, soft blanket...

- Make holiday ornaments together: use paint, cookie dough cutters, family pictures, material... Pinterest has a lot of ideas.
- Volunteer with charitable organizations
- Adopt a child/family or senior citizen for the holidays
- See the sights: Christmas lights tour while listening to favorite Christmas tunes.
- Wilderness walk: take a stroll through some of the parks, especially festive ones.
- Cocoa and Characters night: like reader's theatre, have family members read/act out different characters in your favorite story book.
- Make a family tree: make decorative frames for family photographs and drawings to decorate it.
- Make a festive meal together: each person can plan their part, or favorite traditional family recipe.
- Affirmation Alliance: toss the Christmas plastic ornament to a family member and affirm their strengths and the value they add, then they toss to another...

It's often said, the best things in life are the people you love, the places you've been and the memories you've made along the way!

Resource Connection

Written by Hailey Durham, BSW, & Gradie Chafer, BSW

"This time of year, means being kind to everyone we meet, to share a smile with strangers we may pass along the street." – Betty Black

Places to receive a Thanksgiving meal or food for the family for Thanksgiving will include the local food pantries/mobile food pantries as well as local churches in each community and county. Places that could be of assistance to families during the holidays and/or for presents for the children would include local Toys for Tots, The local Salvation Army, or the local Angel Tree. Local Churches might have some assistance and/or presents available for families as well.



Special Populations: How Can Parents and Teachers Support Each Other?

Written by Shelley Scheuren, BS, Special Education

During COVID-19, how can parents and teacher's support each other?

- Parents and teachers determine the "New Normal".
- Establish a community of support working toward the common goal of helping children develop into emotionally healthy adults.
- Teachers weren't expecting to teach virtually, as well as in person. Or teach using an online format. Parents weren't expecting that they'd be teaching from home.
- Communication between teachers and parents is a must, even when tired, stressed, or overworked. Things have changed, but we all want the same thing; the best for our children. Give each other grace, this is a new situation for everyone.
- Show support by asking, "How are you? How can I help?" Don't assume anything! Ask how to meet shared goals.

- Be thankful for things that go well and ask what isn't working? Communicate where each child needs support and decide together to help them reach the goal.

As we learn how to work with faculty, staff, parents, and students in a new way it will bring stronger parent-teacher relationships in the shared task of nurturing children's healthy relationships, with learning, peers, and with the school community



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!

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Email: TRT@pecanvalley.org

Texas COVID-19 24/7 Support Line: (833)-986-1919

Pecan Valley 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (800)-772-5987



References

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