

# CBMHS WEEKLY REFLECTION

## Maintaining Mental Health During Challenging Times

**Dear Friends,** What is your personal comfort level as New Jersey enters Stage 2 Recovery on Monday, June 15? Are you dying for a real haircut? Desperate to get your kids into summer camp? Eager to get back to the gym? Some of us are ready to jump on every available opportunity, using masks, maintaining social distance and washing hands frequently as recommended. Some are not. **If you, or a loved one,** is extremely vulnerable to the virus, how do you set healthy boundaries and negotiate with family and friends who have different needs? If you are struggling with economic pressure to return to work and your children are desperate for normal interaction with other kids, how do you balance concerns for safety with the need for healthy interactions? **And most of all:** What if you cannot come to an agreement with others in the short term? Can you accept the outcome and proceed with the belief that each family has their own needs and has the responsibility to decide what is best for their family?

### CONSIDER GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

*“Boundaries emerge from deep within. They are connected to letting go of guilt and shame, and to changing our beliefs about what we deserve. As our thinking about this becomes clearer, so will our boundaries. Boundaries are also connected to a Higher Timing than our own. We’ll set a limit when we’re ready, and not a moment before. So will others. There’s something magical about reaching that point of becoming ready to set a limit. We know we mean what we say; others take us seriously too. Things change, not because we’re controlling others, but because we’ve changed.” — Melody Beattie, The Language of Letting Go: Hazelden Meditation Series*

### COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY AND ACCEPT THE OUTCOME



**Use Active Listening**  
Demonstrate that you are listening by nodding, making eye contact and confirming what they have said, e.g. "I understand that you're frustrated and can see your point of view."

**Empathise**  
Put yourself in the other person's position. Imagine how they feel and show that you respect their feelings and point of view.

**Use "I" Statements**  
E.g. "I feel frustrated." Rather than, "You make me frustrated." "I" statements allow you to take responsibility for how you feel and what you want.

**Be Humble**  
See yourself as you really are, with both strengths and weaknesses. Don't talk to people as if you think you're better than them.

**Stay Aware**  
Be thoughtful of what you say and avoid offending people. Do not talk over people or dominate conversations.

**Use Appropriate Language**  
Be aware of the company you are in and use language that is acceptable to those people.

Acceptance does not mean you agree with, condone, appreciate, or even like what has happened.

Acceptance means that you know, regardless of what happened, that there is something bigger than you at work.

It also means you know that you are okay and that you will continue to be ok.

— Iyanla Kanyant

SELF RESPECT	HEALTHY BOUNDARIES	RESPECT FOR OTHER
Be Self-aware: know what you need, how you are feeling and what you believe.	Not every interpersonal problem can be resolved, but we can 'agree' to 'disagree'	Know that others may need and believe differently
Take as much personal responsibility as you can for your own safety and well-being	Say 'yes' when you mean 'yes' and 'no' when you mean 'no.' It is always okay to change your mind.	Know that your personal choice to take risks can negatively impact others.
Ask others for what you want and need from them.	Keep calm; use 'I' statements; look and listen for common ground.	Ask others for what they want and need from you.

### REMEMBER KINDNESS ALWAYS HELPS AND HELP IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE

#### LOVE IN A TIME OF CONFLICT, BENEDICTUS, JOHN O'DONOHUE

When the weave of affection starts to unravel  
And anger begins to sear the ground between you,  
Before this weather of grief invites  
The black seeds of bitterness to find root,  
May your souls come to kiss.

Now is the time for one of you to be gracious,  
To allow a kindness beyond thought and hurt,  
Reach out with sure hands  
To take the shared cup of your love,  
And carry it carefully through this echoless waste  
Until this winter pilgrimage leads you  
Towards the gateway of spring.

**The CBMHS Warm Line is open and anyone can call:** If you are experiencing emotional stress, side effects of the COVID19 pandemic and shelter-in-place order, or from current events, or other issues, reach out. Call Monday through Friday between 10am and 4pm and a licensed counselor will call you back within 24 hours! Call the Warmline to speak to a professional counselor who will listen and provide useful guidance to help you feel better. Receive information about resources and social services needs including depression, grief, anger, parenting support, substance abuse, shelter needs, and more. Request that an outreach call be made to someone who is isolated, lonely, or may not reach out on their own. But remember that the Warm Line is not a crisis hotline— If you need immediate assistance, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

**Middlesex, Somerset & Union County: (732) 867-8647**  
**Monmouth & Ocean County: (732) 784-3394**