

# CBMHS WEEKLY REFLECTION

## Maintaining Mental Health During Challenging Times

**Dear Friends,** As we process the anguish of recent days, may we pause to listen deeply, to honestly acknowledge our own feelings and those of others, and to work earnestly and without hesitation toward the full health and safety of all beings. Oh Lord, hear our prayer.

**Dear Lord,** We are angry and exhausted, outraged and disheartened. We cry out at the trauma and devastation of racism. We grieve the perversion and violence that power, privilege and oppression has wrought in our relationships, our communities, and our nation. We pray for the families and loved ones of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tante Parker, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Philando Castille, and the countless others struck down by the brutality of racism. Lord, we acknowledge that there are many “we’s” in this nation. That some are just waking up to the pandemic of racial injustice while others have been forced to carry it in their bodies, psyches, and ancestry for generations. Lord, help us to re-make our relationships, communities and our nation in their fundamental brokenness. Sustain us. Heal us. Lend us your hope. **AMEN.**

### CONNECTION & RESTORATION

In rawness and vulnerability, we need more than ever to tend to the self and to embrace rest so that we can be restored. In moments throughout the week stop to breathe and meditate on the following:

- Rest so that I can rise.*
- Pause so that I can reflect.*
- Breathe so that I can take in this moment and honor what I’m feeling.*
- Rest so that I can move and mobilize in the experience of now.*

*(Adapted from Tricia Hersey, <https://thenapministry.wordpress.com>. The graphic below is also by Tricia Hersey at this URL. Also on Instagram @thenapministry.*

### MEDITATION

Trauma and emotional pain are felt in the body. A clenching of the stomach, a tightness in the chest, a bracing in our seat. The vagus nerve and psoas muscles are involved in the flight, fight and shut down/freeze responses, and with practice can be engaged to regulate and release the stress that we hold. Take a moment to reflect over the events of the past few weeks and then try the following to engage the vagus nerve and psoas:

**Sit for a few moments and stare straight ahead.**

*Reflecting on the week, what has settled for you and what still lingers?  
Notice what happens in your body and what you are feel.*

**Now look over your left shoulder, using your neck and your hips to turn as you look.**

Come back to center.

**Look up fully.**

**Now look down fully.**

Come back to center.

**Look over your right shoulder, using your neck and your right hip to turn as you look.**

Now come back to center.

*Notice how you feel or what’s different, and breathe.*

*(Adapted from Resmaa Menakem)*

MAY YOU FIND REST AND SILENCE OFFLINE FOR A FEW HOURS EACH DAY. THE CONSTANT ENGAGING WITH THE VOICES OF OTHERS IS TIRING. EVEN IF THE VOICES ARE SPEAKING ELOQUENT TRUTH. GIVE YOUR BRAIN AND HEART A CHANCE TO PROCESS WHAT YOU FEEL AND THINK. YOUR HEART KNOWS A LOT. REST.

**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**