

CBMHS WEEKLY REFLECTION

Maintaining Mental Health During Challenging Times

Dear Friends,

The CBMHS Warm Line is open! Anyone can call— if you are experiencing emotional stress and side effects of the COVID19 pandemic and shelter-in-place order, reach out. Call Monday through Friday between 10am and 4pm and a licensed counselor will call you back within 24 hours! The Warm Line is not a crisis hotline— If you need immediate assistance, call 911 or go to the emergency room. 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.

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

MEANING MAKING EXERCISE

Some have referred to this time as the “great pause” - a time when each of us have been forced out of our normal lives and routines and into a new reality. In that new reality we are given a chance to reflect on our old ways of being and to think about how we want to relate to ourselves, our loved ones, our community, and the world around us both now and in the future. Searching for meaning in times of crisis and adversity can help focus our energy and attention on those things that are most important. Use this time to reflect on the following:

- What is this time teaching me about myself?*
- What do I truly value in life?*
- What matters to me most?*
- Who do I want to be in this world? And*
- What do I hope to contribute to the lives of others?*

Emerging from this period with a greater sense of purpose and connection to our values, while still honoring the difficulty of this moment, can help us ultimately shift to a place of deeper growth and resilience.

GOD, While we all face this pandemic together, this virus has laid bare the structural inequalities of our nation and our world. We pray for those disproportionately suffering from this virus – those who are incarcerated and detained, the undocumented, the poor, those experiencing homelessness, and persons of color. Jesus you looked out for the most vulnerable, the least and the last, and spoke hard truths to those in power. Lord, place the burden of racism and poverty on the minds of our leaders. We ask that truth and empathy be the touchstones of those setting policies for our communities and our nation during this pandemic and beyond. And we ask that you help us to change the systems that strengthen some at the expense of others. **Amen.** *(adapted from world vision)*

FOUR SQUARE BREATHING

When we feel anxious, our breath is often the first thing to reflect our stress. Four square breathing helps us tap into a deeper abdominal breath that can regulate our heartbeat and stabilize blood pressure. It can be practiced anywhere – on a walk, at your desk, before bed – whenever and wherever you need it. Repeat the instructions below 3 -4 times or as many times as you need to help feel calmer in the moment. Be sure to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

