CONNECTIONS: A TIME OF PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND MORE STAY AT HOME PARENTS

During this time of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it is not just important, but vital that we find creative ways to stay connected. We have all seen pictures, videos and postings of loved ones being physically separated from each other during this time.

But, there is also the opposite example of our BCPS employee parents who are now home fulltime and may feel the strains of ‘being ‘over-connected’ to their children, spouse/partners and other family members. If you now find yourself as a fulltime stay at home parent, you might feel even a little guilty for wanting some physical distance!

And then there are those who live in confined and small spaces, where physical distancing is nearly impossible. It is an adjustment for all of us, no matter the particulars of your own life.

Some tips on staying connected, coping with feelings of disconnectedness and being a ‘temporary’ stay at home parent:

♦ For employees who are also parents, keep in mind, that you are a parent first. Some of you are trained teachers but more are not. Check out the COVID-19 BCPS resources
♦ Social Distancing is really hard in small spaces and multigenerational households. How multigenerational families manage social distancing under one roof COVID-19 and Grief: It Helps to Mourn our Bygone Lives. ‘The pandemic has led to a series of losses, from our sense of safety to our social connections to our financial security.’ Psychologists point to ways we can cope and heal (Psychology Today)

WORKING REMOTELY DURING COVID-19 SELF-CARE PRINCIPLES

Dr. Amalio Nieves, Executive Director, Department of Social-Emotional Support, found these self-care principles about working remotely

1. You are not ‘working from home’, you are at your home, during a crisis, trying to work
2. Your personal physical, mental and emotional health is most important right now
3. You should not try to compensate for lost productivity by working longer hours
4. You will be kind to yourself and not judge how you are coping based on how you see others coping
5. You will be kind to others and not judge how they are coping based on how you are coping
6. Your team’s success will not be measured the same way it was when things were normal

"I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being; let me do it now"

Etienne de Grellet
The Baltimore County Department of Health has opened a hotline for residents to call with questions or concerns regarding COVID-19. The number is 410-887-3816.

Accessing COVID-19 Information

Americans are being inundated with information regarding COVID-19. To ensure that you are receiving the most up to date and accurate information, I encourage you to check out the following links:

- World Health Organization
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- State of Maryland Coronavirus Webpage
- Baltimore County Coronavirus Webpage

COVID-19 Testing and Treatment

**BCPS Health Insurances:**

**Cigna:** “Cigna customers will have access to coronavirus (COVID-19) testing, as prescribed by health practitioners, and the company will waive all co-pays or cost-shares to help fight the rapid spread of the virus in the U.S. and for its globally mobile customers. Effective immediately, Cigna will waive customer cost-sharing and co-payments for COVID-19-related treatment through May 31, 2020.” That applies to all BCPS employees who have one of the Cigna health plans.

**Kaiser Permanente:** *Elimination of cost-sharing related to the Coronavirus*

“We’re eliminating any financial barriers for members to ensure they receive the medically necessary services to detect and treat COVID-19. Effective immediately, Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States will waive cost sharing for testing, diagnosis, and treatment of COVID-19. That means we will not bill members a copay, coinsurance, or deductible for services to test, diagnose, and treat COVID-19.”

**Other insurance information:**

**Non-insured:** Maryland has opened an emergency enrollment period under the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) health exchange now through June 15th. The Website address is: www.marylandhealthconnection.gov. The customer service number is: (855) 642-8572. This also includes enrollment in the expanded Medical Assistance Program in Maryland. You can enroll online or call the customer service number for assistance. Help is available in 200 languages.

**Medical Assistance: Is Coronavirus testing and treatment covered under a Maryland Health Connection plan or Medical Assistance?**

“Yes. Health insurance companies are required to waive cost-sharing, including lab fees, co-payments, coinsurance, and deductibles for any visit to test for coronavirus at a doctor’s office, urgent care center, or emergency room.” (www.marylandhealthconnection.gov.)

**Medicare:** “Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) covers a test to see if you have coronavirus (officially called 2019-novel coronavirus or COVID-19). This test is covered when your doctor or other health care provider orders it.” For additional information: https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus”
Meditation: This article outlines simple ways to get started with meditation for beginners and includes tips on focusing on breathing, and also includes guided mediation videos. https://www.mindful.org/how-to-meditate/

Exercise: Gyms and fitness centers being closed doesn’t make exercise impossible! Easy ways to stay active include going for a run or walk around your neighborhood or following a workout video. This article includes a workout video that was designed for people with less mobility, but can be adapted for people of varying skill levels. https://www.forbes.com/sites/felicitycarter/2020/04/08/exercise-at-home-no-matter-your-age---workout-routines-for-seniors/#2ca984d83058

HAI-KU: a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables, in three lines of five, seven, and five, traditionally evoking images of the natural world.

After quarantine color corrections increase bangs are in again
— Abel Maldonado
LIFE KIT

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