MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Tennessee quarterback, Brian Mauer, recently shared his struggle with depression and anxiety in USA today. He wanted to urge everyone to seek help but also to speak up and to share their stories.

He stated that his struggles led him to plan to take his own life in January. In his Instagram account he says, “on Wednesday, January 22, 2020 I planned to take my own life.” ...I looked up and said “god if this isn’t your plan for me please send me a sign.” He said two minutes later his mother called with my baby nephew Jeremiah “to say she loved me.” (#longlivewayne) Mauer says he still has some rocky days but he knows he is going to get the help he needs and hopes others will join him.

During this month, particular efforts are made to raise awareness and remove the stigma surrounding mental health and substance abuse. Living through COVID-19 has caused stress levels to increase for many. You may find yourself worried about your and your family’s health, see changes in sleep or eating, or increased use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs. You may find yourself feeling more depressed. You may lose your concentration or be more forgetful. These are all ‘normal’ reactions to a very ‘abnormal’ time.

Reach out for mental health support, whether you are having a bad day or your depression deepens and of course, if you have thoughts of suicide. Supports available include: BCPS Employee Assistance Program (EAP), (410 887-5414 or Cigna EAP 1-888-4314334); Maryland 211 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-8255.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE HELP (STILL) AVAILABLE DURING COVID-19 DON’T DELAY—GET HELP TODAY

Some have estimated that alcohol sales have increased 55% compared to this period last year. Sometimes during times of stress, people turn to alcohol or other substances as a stress reliever. The opioid epidemic is also still very much with us.

Whether you are in recovery from substance abuse or worried that you, or a family member, may have a problem, there are still many places to seek help, support and education. AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) and NA Narcotics Anonymous are doing many groups online. For treatment resources for substance abuse and mental health, call the National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357). And of course, you can also contact the BCPS EAP.

Try these free screening tools to see whether you might have a problem: AUDIT (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test); DAST-10 (Drug Abuse Screening Test)
SIMPLE HEALTHY RECIPES

Three Ingredient Tomato Soup (Inspire Taste)

4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/2 large onion, cut into large wedges
1 (28-ounce) can tomatoes, whole peeled or crushed
1 1/2 cups water, low sodium vegetable stock, or chicken stock
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt, or more to taste

Melt butter over medium heat in a Dutch oven or large saucepan. Add onion wedges, water, can of tomatoes with their juices, and 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Bring to a simmer. Cook, uncovered, for about 40 minutes. Stir occasionally and add additional salt as needed.

Blend the soup, and then season to taste. The soup doesn’t need to be ultra-smooth, some texture is a nice touch. An immersion blender does make quick work of this, or you can use a blender. If you use a regular blender, it is best to blend in batches and not fill the blender as much as you usually would since the soup is so hot. Remove the center insert of the lid and cover it with a kitchen towel while blending — this helps to release some of the steam and prevents the blender lid from popping off (which can be a big, hot mess).

Frozen Yogurt Bites (I Heart Vegetables)

1 cup vanilla Greek yogurt (0% fat but 2% would be good too)
1 tbsp. coconut oil (optional but it makes them a little softer)
1/2 cup wild frozen blueberries (wild ones are smaller, so they work a little better!)
1/2 cup granola

1. Line a muffin tin with paper or silicone liners (silicone works a little better but paper can work too)
2. Drop 1 1/2 tablespoons of Greek yogurt in the bottom
3. Add 1 tablespoon wild blueberries
4. Add another tablespoon of Greek yogurt on top
5. Sprinkle granola on top. Make sure it’s a thin layer or press it into the Greek yogurt, so it’ll stick
6. You should be able to fill about 8-10 muffin cups
7. Pop it in the freezer for 3 hours or until set; store them in an air tight container; eat them straight from the freezer

POSITIVITY APPS AND WEBINARS

TEMPORARY ANTIDOTES FOR THE TIMES

Our bodies and minds need reprieves from the daily worries, fears, anxiety, uncertainty, etc. we are experiencing during this time. These apps and Webinars might help a little.

♦ Greater Good in Action
  https://ggia.berkeley.edu/

♦ Super Better
  https://www.superbetter.com/

♦ The Key to Success? Grit
  (a TED talk—scroll down to #6)

Send ideas and tips on how you are staying positive so that we can print some of them in our next newsletter to:

empwellness@bcps.org

CARRROLL COUNTY MASK MAKERS PITCH IN TO HELP

On April 15, 2020 Gov. Hogan signed an executive order requiring the wearing of face coverings under ‘certain circumstances’ to include: “all customers over the age of nine are required to wear face coverings while inside the enclosed area of any retail establishment or foodservice establishment.”

Nora Murray, Program Specialist, Office of Family and Community Engagement, found a way to volunteer and make a difference as part of the COVID-19 response by becoming part of the Carroll County Mask Makers. Nora said that in 38 days, that group made 17,000+ masks.

Their goal was to provide a bridge for health care workers in search of PPE (personal protective equipment) especially at the beginning days of the pandemic when PPE was often in short supply. They received requests from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Washington DC. Nora said the group has about 250 mask makers, a Facebook page, and an order and delivery system that practices the required social distancing. The group continues sewing and filling orders.

Dr. Jerome Adams, Surgeon General, will show you how to make your own face covering—it’s easy!

Nora Murray wears one of her masks

Masks in all colors and themes