

ABC's for Good Mental and Emotional Health

A = Ask for Assistance

- Knowing when and how to ask for help is far more important than knowing how to silently endure being in pain. It actually takes more strength to request a helping hand.
- Asking for help gives others the chance to feel good about helping.
- All of us together are smarter than any one of us alone.
- Be mindful of the need to check in with your support system and be proactive.

B = Breaks

- Give yourself a break from worry. These are not normal circumstances and you should not expect yourself to always behave normally.
- Take a break to breathe. Notice how you feel. Be grateful for the good things, and stay grounded in the present when problem-solving.

C = Communicate

- Social isolation & quarantine is like being in a life raft together with your loved ones.
- Communicate directly; don't assume others know what you are thinking or feeling.
- What isn't said is still communicated, but you don't know what it is the other person is hearing.

D = Don't Do Things that will Make the Situation Worse

- Don't self-medicate with alcohol or drugs.
- Don't watch too much news, particularly alarmist news.
- Don't take your frustration out on others.
- If you wouldn't do it pre- and post-COVID, don't do it now.

E = Exercise, Eat, and Sleep

- Routine is the way you keep yourself steady in unpredictable times.
- Taking care of yourself through moderate exercise, eating good foods, and getting enough quality sleep, will minimize any unexpected health issues.

F = Find Your Purpose in Life

- As described on pages 20 and 21, having a strong Purpose in Life can provide a number of physical, mental, and emotional benefits. This is good advice to follow!
- Need help in finding your purpose? Go to [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com) and search for "purpose in life."
- A blog post on the Psychology Today website gives five tips for finding purpose:
 - Step 1: Find out what drives you.
 - Step 2: Find out what energizes you.
 - Step 3: Find out what you are willing to sacrifice for.
 - Step 4: Find out whom you want to help.
 - Step 5: Find out how you want to help.

- For more details, please see the following blog post: “Five Steps to Finding Your Life Purpose.” *Psychology Today*. Written by Tchiki Davis, PhD and posted on December 12, 2017. This article may be accessed at psychologytoday.com/us/blog/click-here-happiness/201712/five-steps-finding-your-life-purpose
- You will find that by helping others, you are also helping yourself!

G = Gratitude

- Find something to be grateful for every day.
- You will often find that you are grateful for other people, and recognizing this will bring you closer to them.

H = Have Fun!

- Spend time doing things you enjoy!
- Losing yourself in a fun activity provides many health benefits and can help relieve stress.

I = Identify Quick Resources for Wellness

- Having a mental-health crisis or feel you just need to talk to someone? **Crisis Text Line (CTL)** is a 24/7 free service where you can connect via text with a live, trained Crisis Counselor anytime for confidential and personal discussions. **Text HOME to 741741** to start.
- A great number of apps are available to promote mental wellness. Many are free and others have fairly low costs – but always check in advance to be sure you know what you are accessing and what the cost will be. Some popular free apps, as listed by PsyCom, include:
 - **MoodTools:** Designed to support people with clinical depression by aiding the path to recovery.
 - **MindShift:** Designed specifically for teens and young adults with anxiety.
 - **Self-Help for Anxiety Management (SAM):** Self-help if meditation “isn’t your thing.”
 - **Quit That!** Helps users beat their habits or addictions.
 - **eMoods:** A mood-tracking app designed specifically for people with bipolar disorder.
 - **Happify:** This mood-training program is your fast-track to a good mood.
 - **Recovery Record:** App for anyone recovering from an eating disorder and wanting to develop a more positive body image.

For more apps, please see “Top 25 Mental Health Apps: An Effective Alternative for When You Can’t Afford Therapy?” written by Jessica Truschel and posted on the PsyCom website at <https://www.psycom.net/25-best-mental-health-apps>

For general information or to speak with a trained Client Services Specialist, please call MSAA’s Helpline at **(800) 532-7667, extension 154**. Questions to MSAA’s Client Services department may also be emailed to MSquestions@mymsaa.org.