

Health Article for January 2021 Church Newsletter

From Mary Beth Williams

TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

In so many ways the past year has seemed long and stressful. There can be fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, about finances or one's job, or feelings of loneliness and isolation.



These stressful feelings can lead to changes in sleeping or eating patterns, difficulty concentrating, worsening of chronic physical or mental health problems, or increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other substances. In addition, young parents are often juggling home-based jobs and home schooling their children at the same time. Senior citizens can be isolated at home or in facilities without the social contacts that enrich their lives.

Healthy Ways to Cope with the Stress

- Know what to do if you are sick and are concerned about Covid-19. Find out who to call and what symptoms to look for. Read articles and listen to the news to stay informed about the latest health information.
- Take care of your body. Eat healthy, well-balanced meals. Exercise regularly – even at home you can watch exercise programs on your computer, DVD, or TV. Stay hydrated with water and healthy fluids.
- Get outside! On nice days, walk outside as far as you can, even if only to the end of the driveway or around the block. Fresh air is amazing in its ability to improve mood and feelings of well-being. Open the windows and air out your house, even for only 15 minutes. It will refresh the air and possibly help remove any bacteria or viruses floating around.
- Try to find activities to avoid excessive intake of alcohol or other substances, which can increase feelings of depression or hopelessness. Many people are discovering activities and hobbies they would ordinarily have not thought of such as baking, sewing, knitting, music, or other crafts.
- Connect with others. Even a phone call or two with people you like and trust can help you feel in contact with the outside world. It's OK to say, "I'm feeling lonely and just want to talk a little while."

Wishing you a healthy and happy New Year, until we can all safely be together again.