

Mental Health Support & Resources



The recent COVID-19 outbreak has changed life for all of us. It has forced us into isolation, and has already affected our mental health (whether we are aware of it or not).

I have made this guide as a resource for you. As a way to check in with yourself, and take any necessary action to protect your mental health & well-being.

You are not alone.

We are all in this together, and we will get through this together.

#PROGRAMYOURSELF

“Every human has four endowments; self-awareness, conscience, independent will and creative imagination. These give us the ultimate human freedom. The power to choose, to respond, to change.”

Stephen Covey

Mental Health Checklist

- Self-Awareness
- Acceptance
- Solutions / Plan of Action
- Support & Resources

*When faced with tragedy, we are also faced with a choice...what will you do with it?
That choice is always yours.*

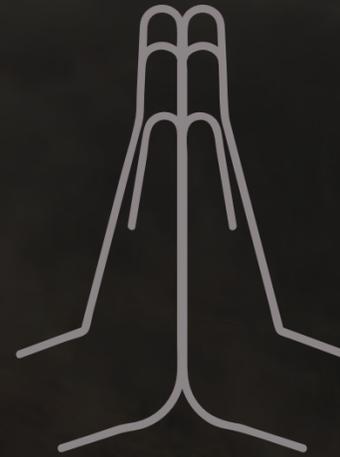
Self-Awareness

Being aware of your own thoughts and emotions is the first step towards making positive change. Make sure to check in with yourself regularly.

Cultivating Self-Awareness requires time, mindfulness, & honesty.

Self-Awareness consists of both *internal* and *external* awareness. How you see yourself, and how the world sees you.

Being aware of how you think, feel, and react to a certain situation will allow you to shift your focus from the problem to solutions.



**"To know thyself is the
beginning of wisdom."**

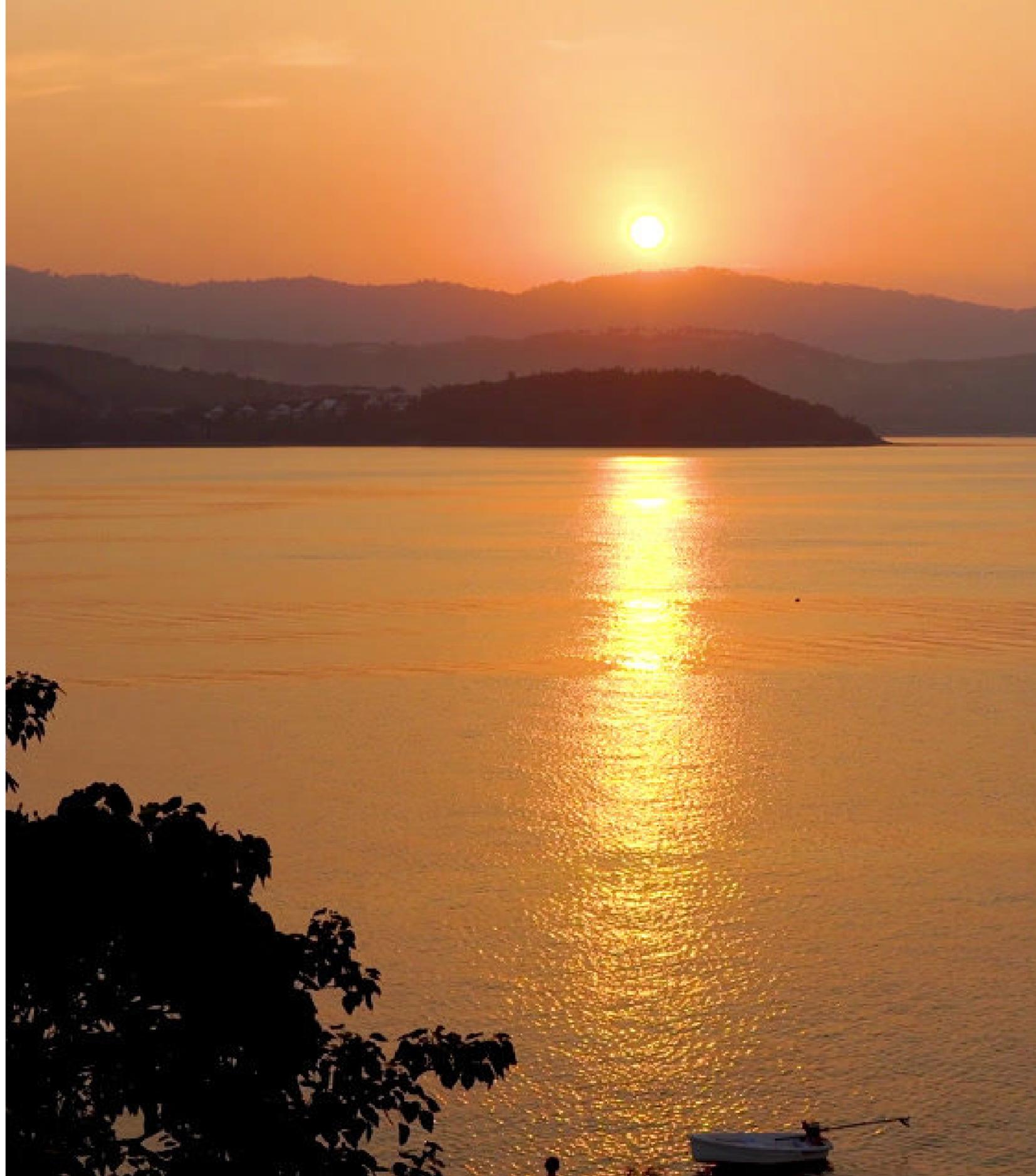
-Socrates

Self-Awareness Tips

- Find a time & quiet space where you can be alone to focus your attention on yourself.
- Focus on "what" questions, rather than "why".
"What can I do to improve how I feel?"
"What are the triggers that lead me to feel this way?"
- Do your best to view yourself from a place of non-judgment. This is not about good vs. bad, this is about you. This is about getting to know yourself so you can best take care of yourself.
What do you admire about yourself?
What would you like to change?
Negative judgements only hold us back.

Finding peace in a time of crisis is possible.

Focus on
what you
can control



Acceptance

“Acceptance doesn’t mean resignation; it means understanding that something is what it is and that there’s got to be a way through it.”

-Michael J. Fox

Accepting something does not mean that you like it, or approve of it. It simply means you acknowledge something for what it is.

Our day-to-day life is *currently* filled with uncertainty. Accepting that uncertainty, rather than fighting it, can lead you to peace.

We can practice acceptance in all parts of our lives. Most importantly, accept yourself for who you are.

Despite what we can not change, we can always change our perspective. Developing an attitude of gratitude will help see you through the hard times.

Accepting something for how it is now, **does not** mean it can not change in the future. **Stay positive!**

Solutions / Plan of Action

Regardless of what you may be currently struggling with (anxiety, depression, negative thinking, an eating disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, etc.) there are always solutions, and ways to create positive change.

Never allow yourself to give up hope on coping with, and even overcoming a mental health issue. You *always* have the power to change.

★ **Self-Programming**

★ **Writing**

★ **Movement**

★ **Gratitude Practice**

★ **Meditation**

★ **Self-love**

★ **Music**

★ **Support System**

"I wake up every morning believing today is going to be better than yesterday."

-Will Smith

Self-Programming

- ⚡ Self-Programming is the act of deliberately thinking & saying aloud positive affirmations in an effort to change your beliefs & the way your mind operates.
- ⚡ Each of us have a narrative playing in our head. Do not forget that you control the story. You choose the meaning behind everything you have experienced in life. I challenge you to **choose to be positive**.
- ⚡ COVID-19 has impacted anxiety and stress levels for everyone. If you have been feeling worried or concerned, make sure to affirm to yourself (out loud) that everything will be ok. At the very least, it will help calm you down in the present moment.
- ⚡ Make a list of the thoughts/beliefs you have about yourself. Any negative thought or belief can be used to create a positive mantra to replace the negative. Use negative thoughts as a trigger to remind you to stay positive.

My mantra during COVID-19:

"No pestilence or plague shall fall upon me, my family, or my friends."

Writing

⚡ Writing can be an amazing tool to analyze and understand what you are thinking, and how you feel. I have struggled with getting stuck on a negative subject or thought, almost like a negative thought loop. What I have found, is that the simple act of writing my thoughts down will actually help me break the negative thought cycle.

⚡ If I asked you to solve an incredibly difficult math problem, would you have an easier time solving it in your head, or on paper? **ON PAPER!** Writing your thoughts down allows you to fully understand how you are thinking, and what you might be able to do to make a positive change. Writing can offer you a new perspective.

⚡ For a positive exercise, try writing down your future dream life. I'm talking cars, houses, living environment, career, relationships, fame, fortune, accomplishments, health, **who you are as a person.**
Ask yourself the following: What would I need to think & believe about myself in order to have that life?
List out the positive thoughts & beliefs that would be required to achieve your dream.
Use the list to program yourself for the life you want.

“I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn.”

-Anne Frank

Movement

⚡ Exercise is a proven anti-depressant! Our mental health is directly linked with our movement practices. Moving around will stimulate endorphins (feel-good hormones) that will boost your mood & how you feel.

⚡ Movement Practices you can try at home:

🏃 Running or walking

🧘 Yoga

🏃 QiGong *

🏃 Calisthenics

🏃 Kendama *

🏃 Dance

⚡ Do not feel like you have to go from 0-100 overnight. Start with 5-10 minutes each day, and slowly increase the amount of time. Simply making the time to move and exercise is a form of self-love, something we could all use a bit more of!

* My personal favorites

"When it comes to health and well-being, regular exercise is about as close to a magic potion as you can get."

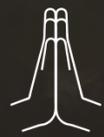
-Tich Nhat Hanh

Gratitude Practice

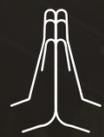
⚡ Research has shown that a practice of gratitude can increase your psychological well-being and life satisfaction. (*McCullough et al., 2002)

⚡ In my own life, developing a gratitude practice has changed the way I perceive the outside world. I am no longer primed to look for negatives. On the contrary, my mind seems to constantly find things to be grateful for all around me.

⚡ Starting a gratitude practice:



Wake up.



Write down ten (10) things you are grateful for.



Repeat each day. **THAT'S IT!**

* McCullough, M. E., Emmons, R. A., & Tsang, J.-A. (2002). The grateful disposition: A conceptual and empirical topography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(1), 112–127. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.82.1.112>

"Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have even more to express gratitude for."

-Zig Ziglar

Meditation



Meditation is a loaded word. Many times, when people hear the word meditation, they immediately picture a bald headed monk, sitting on a hill, chanting "Ohmmmm". However, meditation is not just for monks, and can be extremely beneficial for your mental health.



A meditation practice does not have to be something "woo-woo", it can simply involve quieting your mind so you can become aware of your thoughts and thought patterns.



There is no specific amount of time you need to commit, no specific posture to sit in, and no special clothes to wear. To start, I always recommend sitting in a comfortable position, and following your breath. Simply breathe in and out, focus on the breath, and whenever you find yourself distracted, return your focus to your breath.



Additional meditation resources include YouTube guided meditation videos, and applications such as HeadSpace & Calm.

“The goal of meditation isn’t to control your thoughts, it’s to stop letting them control you.”

-Anonymous

Self-love

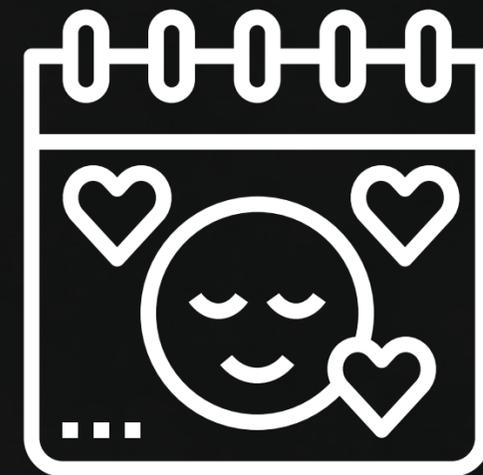
⚡ When is the last time you looked yourself in the mirror, and said "I love you"? Have you ever?

⚡ We all go through life searching for love, from our parents and family, from friends, from relationships. However, we rarely give ourselves the love we desperately want to receive from other people. **Start by loving yourself.**

⚡ Self-love can come in many different forms, and there are countless examples of ways to love yourself. Exercise, healthy eating, self-care, positive self-talk, surrounding yourself with loving people, forgiving yourself, and having fun are all examples of self-love. **Treat Yo' Self!**

⚡ **Self-love Challenge:** Try the following once a day for one week.

- ♡ Find a room with a mirror.
- ♡ Look yourself in the face and say the following:
I love you. I am proud of you. You are incredible.



**“Remember, you have been criticizing yourself for years and it hasn’t worked.
Try approving of yourself and see what happens.”**

-Louise L. Hay

Music



We all have a soundtrack for our lives; when we are working out, when we are hanging with friends, when we are sad and alone...there is almost always music.



Music will change your mood, it will change how you feel inside.

Don't believe me? Go on YouTube, and look up Ludovico Einaudi. Choose any song, and listen. How do you feel inside? What kind of thoughts does the music bring to mind? Specific types of music will illicit specific responses from the listener.



Music can be used as a coping skill to directly shift how we feel.

After losing my brother, it was music that opened my heart & mind to healing.

Music allowed me to face the darkness of my brother's death and overcome it. Music helped save me.



Music is a tool! For me, music greatly helps in opening my mind. I use music when I write, workout, and sometimes even when I meditate. Never underestimate the power of sound.



“Music can heal the wounds which medicine cannot touch.”

-Dr. Debasish Mridha

Support System



We all need a support system, now more than ever.



Your support system can include many different people; **friends, family, a school counselor, a therapist/psychiatrist, teachers, mentors, your neighbor.** There are no specific guidelines, but I highly recommend having at least one trusted adult in your inner circle.



Regardless of who you are thinking of opening up to, **know that there is no shame in talking to someone.**



On my darkest day, I went to my mom. I refused to make the same mistake as my brother, and not allow someone I love to help lift me up. My mom is my angel, she was able to bring a little bit of light into my darkest hour. That light was enough for me to continue forward. **Who would you turn to?**



Remember that we are all in this together, and we will get through this together.

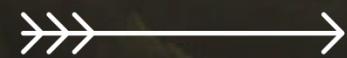
Reach out to your friends and loved ones, just to connect, just to see their face & hear their voice.

“Grief shared is halved; joy shared is doubled.”

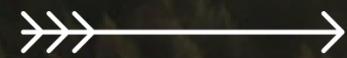
-Proverb

COVID-19

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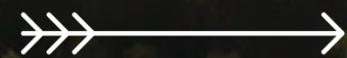
Be easy on yourself. You will have off days. You will have days where you feel unproductive. Forgive yourself & take positive action towards change.



Your school counselors & support staff are still available! Although you can not currently meet with them in person, your school counselors & support staff are available and want to help! Email your school for more information.



Try not to over-consume news and social media. Fear does not help our physical or mental health. Focus your mind on the good.



We are stuck at home, but that does not mean we must stay inside! Get outside, get some fresh air, and feel the sun on your face (while social distancing).



Support & Resources

No matter the time or place, there are people here for you 24/7



You are worth fighting for.



It's okay to grieve your personal disappointments during this time: prom, graduation, seeing your friends, etc. A crisis to you is a crisis to us. Our Crisis Counselors are here for anything: to reach them, just text SHARE to 741741. It's free, confidential, and available 24/7.

The Suicide Prevention Lifeline is always available.
If you are in need, please make the call.

If you are in need, text SHARE to 741741.
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Additional Resources



Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Suicide Hotline (the Trevor Lifeline):

1-866-488-7386 (available 24 hours a day, seven days a week)

TrevorChat online chat: www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/get-help-now



Self-Injury Hotline: 1-800-DON'T CUT (1-800-366-8288)

www.selfinjury.com



Trans Lifeline: 1-877-565-8860

www.translifeline.org



National Teen Dating Violence Helpline: 1-866-331-9474

Text "LOVEIS" to 22522



National Domestic Violence/Abuse Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

www.thehotline.org - online chat available 24/7/365



National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

www.rainn.org - get help 24/7 online or by phone

Thank you!

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Thank you for taking the time to invest in your own mental health. It is my hope that this guide will serve as a foundation for you to maintain your mental health during the COVID-19 Quarantine.

**We will get through this.
Together, we will get through this even faster.**

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me anytime.

**You either allow yourself to be programmed, or you program yourself.
Decide to program yourself.**

Light over Darkness, Always.



Connect with me!



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