



WEST CENTRAL NEWS

March 2020/ Issue VI

Business Not Quite as Usual - WCBH Services During the Coronavirus



Things are changing almost as fast as we can type, but we want to keep you as up-to-date on our operating status as possible. We know, particularly in times of stress, that mental healthcare is essential. We also want to protect, as much as possible, the health of our clients, employees, and those most vulnerable in the communities we serve.

For those who are our clients, please keep in touch with members of your treatment team about upcoming appointments and services. If you have internet access, please "like" us on Facebook, and check our website (www.wcbh.org). We will do

Still Open:
**24/7 Emergency
Help for Those in
Crisis**
800-542-2578

If you don't have a primary care provider, call your state's health line for instructions:

New Hampshire: 2-1-1
Vermont: 802-863-7240

If you are experiencing a critical problem, such as a rapidly worsening shortness of breath, call 911 for

our best to post information there as promptly as possible.

If you feel sick, or have a cough or fever, please stay at home and contact your doctor.

How You Can Make a Difference in this Difficult Time

We are highly aware of our most vulnerable community members and their basic needs to survive. We treat them every day. During this particularly stressful public health threat, many people and organizations can use our help. Some who barely scrape by during "normal" times may find themselves with few resources.

Please consider making contributions to the following non-profit organizations, given their focus on providing for life's most basic necessities (such as food, shelter, and critical health services) to people in dire need:

- **The Upper Valley Haven**
- **NH Catholic Charities**
- **Good Neighbor Health Clinic**

instructions. Do not go to your local emergency room unless you are directed to, as you may transmit the virus (including to medical staff).

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- **Your local homeless shelter or food pantry (many local churches serve as food pantries).**

Food pantries may not have regular hours, so call in advance and leave a message if you need food or know someone who does. Note that organizations may also need drivers to deliver items to those unable to leave their homes.

We will continue to provide our essential services to treat those with mental health and substance use disorders, serving as a social safety net for children, families, and adults. We hope you will make every effort to support your friends and neighbors in dire need.

Finally - the above list of non-profits is not exhaustive. Please let us know of other organizations you feel are doing work to help vulnerable

- **Claremont Soup Kitchen & Food Pantry**
- **Newport Area Association Food Pantry**

people in the Upper Valley and Sullivan County. Please email Dave Celone at dcelone@wcbh.org with information you'd like to share.

Anxiety in the Age of Coronavirus

By now, most of us are familiar with the advice about Coronavirus – wash your hands frequently, don't touch your face, practice social distancing, don't buy masks, avoid large gatherings, cough in your elbow, stay home if you're sick, don't get on a cruise ship...

But for many people, the constant media coverage of preventive measures doesn't ease our anxiety, and it might make it worse. How can we stay abreast of the news and take proper precautions against the disease, while not allowing anxiety to get the upper hand? Some recommendations:

Seek out reliable information – but not too frequently. Constantly checking for updates on the number of people who have

Look for the right kind of support. Confide your fears to your most level-headed friends or family members. don't discuss the virus with people who tend to create drama, and stay off social media forums that focus on the virus. Most of the commenters have little or no medical training, and the forums simply serve to amplify fears.

Keep to your routines. Routines can be stabilizing. Eat well, get enough sleep, and exercise. These basic, healthy activities can allay anxiety and strengthen your immune system, while the structure of your routine is comforting.

Incorporate some anxiety-reducing activities into your day. Turn your phone off. Try yoga, progressive relaxation, or a home fitness routine. Read a book, take a bath, or play a game. We all relax in different ways - the important

been infected and/or passed away can just fuel anxiety. Limit your virus information to 30 minutes a day.

Focus on what you can control. Take the steps recommended by public health officials (see above), and work out some reasonable contingency plans – like figuring out childcare if schools close but your work doesn't. Proactive planning can help you feel more in-control. Just don't whip yourself into a frenzy over every possible scenario.

thing is to clear your mind for (at least) a little bit.

Stock up, but don't hoard

Having some extra food and supplies can help ease anxiety and help you to feel in control, but buy things you will use anyway. Limit provisions to about two weeks, and store them out of sight.

If your anxiety is out of control, making it difficult for you to sleep, eat, work, or function normally, talk to your PCP or a therapist.

Medication and/or behavioral techniques can help.

Excerpted from the Wall Street Journal, March 5, 2020.

We want to thank Geokon for their tremendous gift in support of West Central's work in the Upper Valley and Sullivan County! West Central provides over \$600,000 in charitable care every year, and we rely on good neighbors in the community to help us do it. Thanks, Geokon!!!

The logo for Geokon, featuring the word "GEOKON" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters "GEO" are in blue, and "KON" is in black.

**Mental Healthcare
and the Fight for
Access - The
Economic Side of
Stigma**

With 1 in 5 people living with a mental health disorder in the US, why is it so hard to get good, affordable mental health care? Untreated mental illness takes an enormous toll: poor health outcomes, missed work, family breakdowns, high healthcare costs, chronic diseases, and premature death, are estimated to cost



over **5 trillion dollars** every year in the US alone, so it would seem obvious to have accessible, affordable treatment. Yet only half of those referred for treatment are seen by a mental health care provider. Only half of psychiatrists accept any type of insurance. And only 35% of psychiatrists accept new patients with Medicaid.

The reason? Historically, mental health disorders have been stigmatized and not considered to be actual health problems. Instead, mental illness has been viewed as a defect of character, hysteria, or laziness. The result has been the development of higher out-of-pocket costs, shorter provider lists, more coverage limits, and less access to mental health care. The number of young people with private insurance that doesn't cover *any* mental healthcare has doubled since 2012, and over 10 million adults report an unmet need for mental health care.

As the community mental health care provider for Sullivan County and the Upper Valley, we believe that behavioral health services should be available to all, and that it's time to break the stigma surrounding mental illness and substance use disorders. Mental illness is a health problem, and it requires treatment like any other health condition. West Central is proud to accept Medicaid, self-pay, and most forms of private insurance.

A Podcast for Your Ears

We've been busy! There are three new podcasts on our site (wcbh.org) that you may find of interest:



- ***Trauma Informed Care: How Adverse Childhood Experiences Impact Teen and Adult Physical & Emotional Health*** with Erin Barnett, PhD of West Central Behavioral Health (21 min.)
- ***On Mindfulness*** with Angela Krapovicky, MA, LCMHC of West Central Behavioral Health (26 min.)
- ***How to Be a Happier Parent*** with K J Dell'Antonia, author of *How to be a Happier Parent: Raising a Family, Having a Life, and Loving (Almost) Every Minute* (34 min.)

All of these podcasts are interviews, hosted by Chris Seibel of Hanover High School and Katie McDonnell of West Central Behavioral Health.

[Click Here To Listen](#)

Want to make an appointment? Call (603) 542-5128

We're All About Second Chances...

Did you miss it? Misplace your donation envelope? Get overwhelmed by holiday bills? You can support our services any time of the year!

[Donate to Our Annual Appeal](#)

Sharing This Newsletter Might Save a Life!

This newsletter goes out to all WCBH staff, our Board members, and our many friends and supporters. Please share it broadly with your friends and family so people remember our name and the work we do as this region's community mental health and substance use clinic. **When people in need know who we are, they'll contact us *when they need help*.**



We're Here When You Need Us

West Central Behavioral Health serves clients in the Upper Valley and Sullivan County, and has offices in Lebanon, Claremont, and Newport, NH.
WCBH is a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization.