

From Mary Russo, President and CEO
Mental Health Association of Rochester/Monroe County

As concerns over the COVID-19 "Coronavirus" have increased we are taking steps towards promoting the safety and wellness of all in our community. This is an evolving situation which requires us to make the best decisions as new information becomes available. I am writing to provide you with an update on services for the Mental Health Association of Rochester/Monroe County (MHA) as well as share some tips and strategies to maintain your mental wellness.

Effective Today, March 12, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. all of our services are still being offered, while adhering to the NYS Department of Health recommendations. The MHA Self-Help Drop-In Support Services, Life Skills Services and Creative Wellness Opportunities locations will remain open. The MHA will be screening all guests upon arrival. The MHA will begin using Telemental Health Services to continue to offer Home and Community Based Services and Family Support Services. We will continue to follow the guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control as well as policies enacted by our State, County and local governments. I want to thank our dedicated staff members who are working diligently to maintain a safe and healthy environment for everyone at MHA.

We understand that many members of the community may be experiencing increased stress or dealing with isolation at this time. Paul Gionfriddo, President And CEO Of Mental Health America [recently shared some helpful tips](#) for individuals dealing with isolation that I would like to share with you:

- Use your smart phone to stay connected to family and friends. Shift from texting to voice or video calling to feel more connected.
- Keep comfortable. Do the things you already enjoy doing at home; just do more of them.
- Practice stress relief whenever you feel anxiety building - do some deep breathing, exercise, read, dig in the garden, eat some ice cream - whatever works for you.
- Don't do anything you'd consider to be unhealthy for you, such as excess drinking - that will just increase your anxiety afterwards.
- Keep looking forward. Make some plans for six months down the road.

In addition if you are experiencing a crisis, the Crisis Text line is available 24/7 by texting 741741; you will be connected with a lived trained counselor.

During difficult times, communities can come together and support one another. The Mental Health Association of Rochester/Monroe County will continue to support our community to the best of our ability during this challenging time. Please check back frequently for updates to our services as this is a fast-changing situation that requires flexibility from everyone.

Be Well,

