Mental health keys to COVID-19 challenge

by Brian McCabe
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Three keys that can help during the difficult challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic are to maintain your routine, to find time daily to do something you enjoy and to find ways to connect with others while maintaining social distancing, said Mandy Kaisner, chief operations officer for Solvista Health, and Sona Dimidjian, professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of Colorado-Boulder.

“I’ve spent 20 years studying and a widely supported approach is paying attention to routine and rapid disruption of your life,” Dimidjian said.

If working from home, Dimidjian said, prepare for the day as you usually would, by keeping a similar schedule, showering and dressing for work every day and keeping a scheduled work routine.

When it comes to finding ways to doing something we enjoy, Kaisner suggested getting out family activities, working physical health either at home or individually outside, doing hobbies and watching TV, said Dimidjian. “Try doing something new and get in general just staying as engaged as possible.”

While it’s important to know some of the common emotions people may experience with social distancing, it’s also to emphasize that we are resilient, and as a community we can come together to support one another through this tough time. “We need the time,” Dimidjian said. “I consider if there are ways of outreach and simply using video options. Take the time to support our youth during this time. It’s an opportunity for us to do this together in a different way.”

Kaisner said, “Think about your time in this community and what we can do to support one another outside, doing hobbies and watching TV.”

When it comes to staying connected with friends and family during this period of social distancing, technology offers many options. Many smartphones also have video options, such as Facetime. “I think this is an unprecedented time in our country. When we look back in history, we can tell our kids about the efforts we took to protect our most vulnerable. Many of us have loved ones that we can easily identify that fit within this category.”

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Kaisner said Solvista is offering help in several ways. She said you can call their local number, 719-529-6520, to arrange to speak with a counselor, text TALK to 38258 from anywhere in the state or visit solvistabehavior.org for more information.