

Health Home Herald



Taking Care of Yourself and Others The Importance of the Human Connection

By Silke Kramer, HCA

May was Mental Health Awareness month and the focus of this year's topic was the importance of the human connection. There is a plethora of information on exercise, healthy diet and fitness, which are all important to our overall wellbeing. Often forgotten, is the importance of how face-to-face connections play an important role in our overall mental health.

In an increasingly isolated and digitally engaged world, we need real connections more than ever, and the deep impact of both human and social connections should not be overlooked. Connection is not an exchange of information. It's an exchange of humanity and emotion. However, in a pandemic envi-

ronment, with social distancing requirements, the ability to connect face-to-face with others is more difficult, which can lead to loneliness and depression.

Mental Health Awareness Month focused on fighting loneliness by spreading awareness about the importance of human connections. As social beings, we all thrive in a supportive community. The National Alliance on Mental Illness identifies three beneficial elements having a community provides:

Belonging – Having a sense of community helps people be their true selves while embracing their most positive qualities.

Support – When you're feeling down or struggling with some-

thing, having somebody to call and talk to can help you work through your emotions and make you feel safe.

Purpose – In communities, people not only gain support, but they give it as well. Helping others will help give your life meaning and purpose.

Developmental Psychologist, Susan Pinker in her book, "The Village Effect," explores how social, face-to-face interaction is critical not only for the short-term happiness but also for long-term health and in one of her quotes she states:

"Face-to-face contact releases a whole cascade of neurotransmitters and, like a vaccine, they

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

protect you now, in the present, and well into the future, so simply shaking hands, giving somebody a high-five is enough to release oxytocin, which increases your level of trust, and it lowers your cortisol levels, so it lowers your stress.”

Reaching out to others is important and there are good ways to build friendships and improve the support network, such as make an effort to call two people each day or join an online support group and schedule virtual coffee dates with a group of friends. We can also benefit from interacting with people we meet during the day, such as neighbors or people in the grocery store.

There are tons of ways to reach out. Listed below are some tips from helpguide.org for connecting with others:

Call a friend or loved one and arrange to meet up. If you are both busy offer to run errands or exercise together. Try and make it a regular get together.

If you feel you do not have anyone to call, reach out to acquaintances. Lots of other people feel just as uncomfortable about making new friends as you do – so be the one to break the ice.

Get out from behind your TV or computer screen. Do your best and do not neglect your real-world

relationships in favor of virtual interaction.

Be a joiner. Join networking, social, or special interest groups that meet on a regular basis. These groups offer opportunities for meeting people with common interests.

Don’t be afraid to smile and say hello to strangers you cross paths with. Making a connection is beneficial to both of you – and you never know where it may lead! This past year, with most of us wearing a mask, a smile was difficult to see, but saying hello can still be beneficial to both of you.

Even after the pandemic, when life returns to normal, we should not forget the social connection and why connectedness is so important to our overall mental health. We need to stay linked with our support groups, check in with our loved ones, and remember to continue to reach out and meet with other people.



Just For Fun

How do you spell the names of the letters of the alphabet? If you are an avid Scrabble player, you may find this easy. I have included three examples but don’t be fooled because they are the easy ones.

Letter	Spelling in Modern English
A	<i>a</i> _____
B	<i>bee</i> _____
C	<i>cee</i> _____
D	_____
E	_____
F	_____
G	_____
H	_____
I	_____
J	_____
K	_____
L	_____
M	_____
N	_____
O	_____
P	_____
Q	_____
R	_____
S	_____
T	_____
U	_____
V	_____
W	_____
X	_____
Y	_____
Z	_____

Care Coordinator Corner

PCHS submitted on behalf of CC Raina Magua with KWA

Mr. "L" is a 71 year old client with heart disease, hypertension and hyperthyroidism and who was homeless for many years. He had just been relocated to Pierce County after living under Seattle's bridges and hopping from shelter to shelter. Thanks to Seattle's housing services, he was finally able to get his own apartment. He had no clean clothes and had no furniture or food in his home basically coming to Pierce County with the clothes on his back. I dropped off many care packages and home

necessities such as warm blankets, detergent, cleaning supplies, and food from the food bank. Through the Health Home program we were able to develop an action plan. His long-term goal was to live a long healthy life, and he had several short term goals including finding a PCP in the area close to his new home. He had loved his old doctor in Seattle and wanted to find one who genuinely cared about his health. Mr. L was not familiar with health care resources in Pierce County and did not know where to start. We researched doctors in his area that accepted his insurance and found one with

MultiCare. After arranging an initial appointment, Mr. L was extremely happy and grateful for the assistance because his new doctor had been very "thorough." Another of his short-term goals was to lower his blood sugar and blood pressure. I helped him obtain a glucose meter and blood pressure monitor. He stopped eating sweets and so far his blood sugar and blood pressure levels have been stable. He recently shared that he was very happy and felt like he was 20 years younger after being able to remove the foods from his diet that were not healthy for him.

Client Information and Resources Webpage

The Client Information and Resources webpage provides assistance, contact information and other resources for clients of the Aging and Long-Term Support Administration (AL TSA). These pages are designed to help clients more effectively navigate their services and find the help they need. The page was developed and is continually updated with the input of the Ser-

vice Experience Team. Please share the link with your clients so they may have this resource: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/home-and-community-services/client-information-and-resources>



Submit your story, resource, or ideas to the Care Coordinator Corner via our newsletter inbox:

healthhomenewsletter@dshs.wa.gov

Spotlight on Resources



Suicide Prevention Training Resources

Care Coordinators may encounter clients who are higher risk for depression and suicide. Below are some helpful training resources:

Statewide agencies offering training in suicide prevention:

The Washington chapter of the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention: <https://afsp.org/chapter/washington>

Forefront: <http://www.intheforefront.org/>

Crisis Clinic of Thurston and Mason Counties offer suicide awareness presentations: <http://www.crisis-clinic.org/>

The Crisis Clinic of King County: <https://www.crisisconnections.org/>

To find more training resources contact these providers directly:

Question, Persuade, Refer: <https://qprinstitute.com/>

safeTALK by LivingWorks: <https://www.livingworks.net/safetalk>

ASIST: <https://www.livingworks.net/asist>

Local suicide prevention coalitions throughout Washington State also offer suicide prevention trainings. This website lists current coalitions in our state: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/InjuryandViolencePrevention/SuicidePrevention/Community#coalition>

Schools and Educational Service Districts offer suicide prevention training:

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction: <http://www.k12.wa.us/safetycenter/YouthSuicide/SuicidePrevention.aspx>

Health professionals can access suicide prevention trainings:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/ForPublicHealthandHealthcareProviders/HealthcareProfessionalsandFacilities/SuicidePrevention/TrainingPrograms/2017ModelList>

Coordinated Care of Washington offers suicide prevention classes for foster parents through their Community Education Team. Anyone can reach out to the team by emailing: communityeducation@coordinatedcarehealth.com.

Webinar Trainings

Join us for free monthly webinar trainings designed for Health Home Care Coordinators and allied staff. Webinars are held from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. the second Thursday of each month.

Please use this link to register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3565604472038639374>
When registering, please make sure your email address is correctly entered. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. Please add to your calendar.

Invitations are posted on DSHS website at <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/washington-health-home-program-%E2%80%9393-training-invitations> so check often for any updates to topics and links.

July	Diabetes and Pre-Diabetes Prevention
8	
Aug.	Managed Care/HH Enrollment
12	



Participant Portrait

*CC AHP submitted on behalf of
CC Lia Klecha works for Rural
Resources*

Initially when working with this Health Home client, her weight and diabetes were not being managed and were significantly impacting her mental health, with her scoring 14 on the PHQ-9. The client weighed over 400 pounds. Her swollen feet and legs, due to diabetic neuropathy, were making it extremely painful for her to walk or move around. The client’s diet consisted of carbs such as pasta, foods with high sodium and several glasses of soda each day. In addition, she feared showering with the risk

of falling and was overwhelmed with barriers of getting a grab bar. The client routinely visited her PCP but expressed that she often forgets to ask questions regarding her health while at appointments. The Health Home program has helped this client by getting her connected to resources such as free used durable medical equipment, a free grab bar and free shower chair which directly contributed to her feeling safer in her own bathroom. Through modeling methods and assisting her with overcoming an obstacle that was once a barrier, this client has felt encouragement in her wanting to take care of her health. She is currently focused on forming better eating habits and has since bought a type 2 diabetes

cookbook to help her prepare meals. In addition, this client has lowered her soda intake and now carries a water bottle around with her. She also takes a notebook with her to all appointments where she will write down any questions she has as well as important visit notes. Since using the notebook, she has been able to remember to ask her PCP about getting diabetic shoes and diabetes management. She has recently had a fitting for her diabetic shoes and is on a new medication for diabetes. By being more involved in her healthcare, this client has increased her confidence and overall well-being, as she scored a 4 on last month’s PHQ-9 assessment which was the lowest it has ever been.

