



## Public Safety Psychological Services

20818 44<sup>th</sup> Ave W. Suite 150, Lynnwood, WA 98036  
Office (425) 775-4477, fax (425) 527-0466

Cerise M. Vablais, MBA, PhD, ABPP [cvablais@psspc.net](mailto:cvablais@psspc.net)  
Board Certified Specialist in Police and Public Safety Psychology

### Staying Sane In Insane Times - Issue #4

This weekly tip sheet is to support you and your families during this public health emergency. During our annual wellness visits, using the acronym **PIES**, we discuss ideas for staying healthy and resilient. We welcome your ideas – email us at [cvablais@psspc.net](mailto:cvablais@psspc.net) As always, if you or a loved one are feeling suicidal, please call “911”, Code4 Northwest or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

#### Physical Health – the “P”

1. **Exercise: *Dance Party in the Chicken!*** A personal note here: when my daughter was a toddler, she loved to dance and she confused the words “kitchen” and “chicken” so we started having a “*Dance Party in the Chicken*” whenever we cooked dinner or at random times whenever we felt the need for **JOY!**. Dance is one of the best forms of exercise in that your body, mind and spirit all get involved.. So crank up some tunes and dance the night (or day) away. (There are also many “live” DJ parties on various forms of social media you may want to check out.)

**Challenge:** This week I will rock out to \_\_\_\_\_ (name your favorite bands).

#### Intellectual Health – the “I”

1. **Stay FACT based.** The news media thrives on sensationalism. Choose what you listen to or read wisely. Read factual data from the CDC and WHO on COVID19.
2. **Read something new.** Spend 10 minutes reading something you are interested in and know very little about. This can be a magazine article, a book, short story or blog. Examples: Celestial navigation; the history of the developing of writing instruments; How to make a souffle, etc. (You get the picture)

**Goal:** This week I will also read something about \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Emotional Health – the “E”

1. **Check in.** It’s been over a month now that we’ve been doing all this “new normal”. *How are you holding up?* Seriously, ask yourself. Any answer is ok. Now, take a minute to think of one thing you **REALLY** miss about the “old” way. Maybe it’s going to a movie. Maybe it’s coffee with a friend Or maybe it’s the gym. Pick one thing. *Write that down on a piece of paper and save it somewhere.* Now, take a minute to pick one thing that you **REALLY** enjoy about the present situation. Maybe more time with family. Maybe the extra time you have without a commute if you are working from home. Just one thing. **Write that down and keep that with you this week as a reminder that there is good available to us if we choose to focus on it.**

**Challenge:** I will find JOY at least once daily. Something that brings me joy is: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Spiritual Health – the “S”

1. **Substance Abuse and Recovery:** If you or a family member struggle with addictions or are in recovery, this can be a particularly difficult time. Most 12 step programs stress **fellowship and community which is the opposite of the social isolation** required by the COVID19 social distancing guidelines. Recovery, however, has gone online and there are thousands of 12-step meetings online around the world. *Just do a search for “Online AA meetings.” If you or someone you care about needs help, it’s free, anonymous and available 24/7.*
2. **Goal: Celebrate special holidays.** This week many people are have religious holidays. Celebrate them with family via videoconference. Yes, it can be messy and awkward with technical issues, etc. but seeing their faces will bring you and THEM joy. Set a fancy table, and celebrate. You can choose to feel joy or suffering right now. **I recommend you choose joy.**

*Everything will be all right in the end. If it's not all right, it is not yet the end Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*



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### Staying Sane In Insane Times –“PIES” for Kids and Teens #3

During our annual wellness visits, using the acronym **PIES**, we discuss ideas for staying healthy and resilient. We welcome your ideas – email us at [cvablais@psspc.net](mailto:cvablais@psspc.net) As always, if you or a loved one are feeling suicidal, please call “911”, Code4 Northwest or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

#### Physical Health – “P”

1. *Creating individual space.* Kids may really benefit from creating a special space within the house or their room for their “study area”. This does not need to be a permanent structure. *Get creative and let them decorate their space.*
2. *Dance for Kids:* This week I recommended a “Dance Party in the Chicken” for adults. Most kids love dancing. This week let them rock out and encourage dancing on a regular basis.

#### Intellectual Health – “I”

- **With the news that school will be closed, your child may feel a sense of loss.** Let them acknowledge that feeling for a brief time and then help them brainstorm on how to finish the school year in a positive way. (Yes I know, this is REALLY hard on them and REALLY hard on you but remember, YOU set the example and kids will pick up YOUR energy so go have your cry in the closet or the bathroom and then pull it together.). I recommend they write a letter to their teacher and to friends. Pen Pals are making a comeback. Try it – your child will likely be thrilled to receive physical mail! ☺
- **Make an “I Miss THIS” jar.** Validate your child’s feelings that things are just not ok right now. ***Find a jar and have your family members write down things that they miss and add them to this jar.*** Popular choices: Hugs from friends, Going to a movie; Sports activities, etc. I suggest limiting it to 1-2 a day. When things return to “normal” we plan to draw one item from the jar every week and participate or do that activity. (And HINT HINT: in the future when this time is behind us, this is like a Pay it Forward Gratitude Jar. These are the things and experiences that “Future Us” will cherish)

#### Emotional Health – “E”

- Kids are feeling stressed out, lonely, bored and tired. At some point, when your child is in a good mood, have your child write down 10 positive emotions and 10 negative emotions. Put all the slips of paper into a bag. ***Every morning, have them pick two that describe the way they are feeling.*** If it’s negative, have them pick two positive emotions from the envelope and use those to help guide their day. ***Put the negative ones back in the envelop and encourage them to act out their positive emotions for a bit.*** NOTE: if your child continues to experience sadness, fear, hopelessness, etc. for more than a week or two, contact a mental health professional – many are offering video teletherapy for kids and adults.

#### Spiritual Health – “S”

- ***Take it outside:*** If your child loves fantasy, the weather is getting nice enough to consider having them make a fairy garden or troll place or angel sanctuary. ***Something (preferably outside) where they can use their imagination and be creative.*** If it is consistent with your spiritual beliefs, consider having the angels, fairies, etc. leave small gifts for your child, e.g. new art supplies, a book, cookies, etc.
- If you have grandparents or older relatives that may be feeling especially isolated, ***consider video meetings with your child and their loved one.*** Have “story time” where your child takes turns reading aloud with their relative. **Connection to others is the number one predictor of a long, happy life.** Find ways to help your child stay connected.

“Choose to be optimistic; it feels better.” – Dalai Lama