



**Mental Health  
Recovery Board**  
Clark | Greene | Madison

*Pathways for everybody, every family.*

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## NEWS

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### **Mental health considerations amid COVID-19 pandemic**

SPRINGFIELD (MARCH 20, 2020) — Yesterday, Clark County Combined Health District (CCCHD) reported the first “presumptive positive” test result for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in a Clark County resident. This positive case only confirms what was already suspected; that there is community spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 in Clark County. Social distancing measures are more important than ever and will most likely increase. We must do everything we can to help protect our most vulnerable residents.

“CCCHD and our partners have been planning and preparing to respond to cases when they occur,” said Charles Patterson, Clark County Health Commissioner. “We know this will not be the only case in Clark County, so we are urging everyone to follow prevention practices including recommended social distancing guidelines. This is not a time to panic. It is a time for our community to pull together by following the recommendations to protect one another. Together we can save lives.”

During stressful times, mental health concerns are brought to the forefront.

“Knowing that Clark County now has a positive case might exacerbate mental health concerns and stress for community members,” said Dr. Greta Mayer, CEO of Mental Health Recovery Board of Clark, Greene & Madison Counties (MHRB). “This response is completely normal, but there are several steps you can take to help manage stress.”

Here are a few tips Dr. Mayer recommends for how to manage distress related to COVID-19:

1. **Seek information only from reputable sources**, like the Ohio Department of Health, Clark County Combined Health District, or Mental Health Recovery Board of Clark, Greene & Madison Counties. Credible information is being shared as it becomes available on the following websites: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus), [www.coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://www.coronavirus.ohio.gov), [www.ccchd.com](http://www.ccchd.com), and [www.facebook.com/mentalhealthrecoveryboard](http://www.facebook.com/mentalhealthrecoveryboard). People with questions about COVID-19 can call the Ohio Department of Health COVID-19 Call Center, 7 days a week from 9AM – 8PM at: 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).
2. **Limit media exposure**. Research suggests that in times of stress, excessive media intake can lead to negative mental health outcomes. Limiting your daily media use can help reduce panic and distress.
3. **Find new ways to do the things that usually help you reduce stress**. Many places are offering online options to continue doing what you enjoy from your living room. Churches are live-streaming services, gyms are offering free in-home classes, museums are offering virtual visiting options, and while Clark County Public Library is closed until April 6, 2020, you still can visit their digital library for audiobooks and e-books. Enjoying hobbies in a different way and developing a new, healthy routine will increase a sense of purpose and hope.
4. **Follow recommendations of health experts**. Eat well, exercise, sleep enough, stay hydrated, and avoid excessive use of alcohol and drugs, in addition to following practices that will help limit the spread of COVID-19.
5. **Connect with others (virtually, please)**. While practicing social distancing can limit physical contact with loved ones, consider connecting virtually through phone calls, texts, video chats, or social media platforms.
6. **Recognize symptoms of distress**. Look for signs of distress in yourself, your family, and your friends. Signs include: persistent worry or fear, sleeping or eating either too little or too much, isolating yourself emotionally, fighting more than normal with family and friends, having difficulty concentrating, having the same thoughts repeatedly, feeling hopeless or helpless, smoking or drinking more alcohol than usual, or having thoughts of harming yourself or others.
7. **If you are feeling distressed for an extended period of time, reach out for help**. The following resources are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week:
  - Ohio Crisis Text Line: Text “4HOPE” to 741-741
  - Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990, or text “TalkWithUs” to 66746 for English or “Hablanos” to 66746 for Spanish, Deaf/Hard of Hearing TTY 1-800-846-8517
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

“Just as physical health providers are necessary during this pandemic, so are providers delivering care for mental illness and substance use disorders,” said Dr. Mayer. “Locally, we are supporting behavioral health providers to offer assistance, supplies, funding, and ensure that they are still able to deliver quality mental health and substance use services during this crisis, because we know our communities need them now more than ever,” said Dr. Mayer.

For more updates on COVID-19 and tips on manage distress during this time, join Commissioner Patterson and Dr. Mayer on Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm for a Facebook Live on the CCCHD Facebook page.

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