

# Children's Service Center SAP Newsletter

## April 2020

CSC/RCC is considered a life-sustaining business and will remain open with modifications throughout the pandemic!

Crisis runs 24/7 without shutdowns. We are trying to see people in the office from 8:30-5 weekdays to keep people out of the ER, which has a higher risk of coming in contact with someone with COVID-19. Crisis is also screening by phone to determine the best course of action (de-escalate by phone, refer to therapy, or conduct face-to-face crisis assessment).

Therapy and medication are available through telepsych by phone or FaceTime. If you have never received services through CSC/RCC, we can do intakes by telephone to reduce risk. Call today to schedule an appointment!

**Wilkes-Barre: 570-825-6425**

**Tunkhannock: 570-836-2722**



## Growth in a time of crisis

*I'm lost. There's nothing to do besides watch the news. This is going to change everything. It gets worse every day. What if...*

The sensation of loss of hope seems so prevalent right now. It's easy to get sucked into watching for the latest updates on COVID-19 and catastrophizing those updates into an apocalyptic mess. Perhaps it feels really easy to believe, in this moment that this is the absolute worst-case scenario and that we **should** allow ourselves to engulf ourselves in the descent.

The sense of disequilibrium, or unbalance, is pervasive. And of course we feel unbalanced. In a matter of weeks, much of our lives has dramatically changed. Our routines 1 month ago are nothing like our routines today.

Within and directly because of this pandemic, a beautiful thing may be happening. Through this discomfort, perhaps you are dis-

covering parts of yourself or your environment that you didn't see or notice before, or you are finding value in people, routines, and attitudes that you did not value previously.

We realize, in times of crisis, what is special, vital, and valuable. We realize that our priorities may not have aligned with our actions before the event. We learn. We begin to understand. Maybe we start listening and hearing differently. Maybe we start thinking and speaking differently.

So *what if* indeed. What if we accept the changes instead of resisting? What if we cope with the discomfort of growth? What if we begin noticing and honoring the growth we see inside of ourselves and around us?

What if we find reasons to smile? Will that mean this didn't hurt, that we weren't frightened? No, those are true, too. If the disequilibrium (unbalance) is difficult, what if we applied some positive to balance out the discomfort?

Growth is necessary. And it's either, "we grow together or we grow apart."

— Akil Victor



# Fear, Anxiety, and COVID-19:

## Why this feels different and what to do about it

In any crisis, the human brain's sympathetic nervous system, which some call the "low brain," activates to put the person in the "fight-flight-freeze" response. Our sympathetic nervous system automatically activates when we are in danger, such as if a car is backing up toward us as we walk behind it, with 3 outcomes: fight the threat, run from the threat, or freeze in place. If a car is backing up toward me, I will most likely step out of the way.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic poses an invisible threat that will not respond to our typical fight-or-flight responses. We cannot punch COVID-19, and that makes COVID-19 a difficult threat for us to manage emotionally and mentally. Our brains are trying to find ways to stay safe while simultaneously being jarred by the invisibility and open-ended timeline of the event, so we need to be careful to define and recognize the difference between fear and anxiety.

The difference between fear and anxiety is this: fear is an automatic response to a current, real threat (e.g., the airplane is crashing), while anxiety is perseveration to a potential threat (e.g., what if the airplane crashes?). For most people, what we are feeling about COVID-19 is anxiety. *What if I get it? What if my loved one(s) contract the disease? How long will this go on? Will my finances be able to last that long? What if we have to cancel our [trip, event, etc.]?* People who have been directly impacted by the disease are experiencing fear, though. *What do we need to do? What is the best course of action for recovery?*

Anxiety is best soothed first by calming the sympathetic nervous system. The number 1 way to retake control from the sympathetic nervous system is fresh oxygen from big, deep breaths, because fresh oxygen communicates to the low

brain, "the high brain has this and will take over now." In short, we don't breathe well when our sympathetic nervous systems are activated because we're preparing to run or fight, so we take more rapid, shallow breaths. So step 1: take some deep breathes.

As you are breathing, notice your environment--internal or external. Are you tired? What color blue is the sky? Are you hungry? Is the blanket soft? This is called **grounding**, and grounding specializes in moving us away from the *what ifs* and back into the here and now. If a person is struggling against grounding, then reminding themselves, "I am washing my hands. I am staying a safe distance from other people. The people with whom I live are not ill. We are all taking care of ourselves" are excellent affirmations.

Anxiety thrives on feelings of uncontrol, so the final note I will add is that we each need to be controlling what we can control. Turn off the news. Get off social media. Take a walk. Cook a great meal. Hug somebody whom you're safe to hug. FaceTime your favorite person. Write your memoir. As we pull ourselves away from the things we cannot control, like people's attitudes on social media or the 24-hour hysteria and updates on the cable news cycle, we regain connection with what we can control.

We can control our sleep schedules, our exercise habits, our eating. We can control how much we talk to other people and the content of our conversations. We can say, "no, I don't want to talk about the pandemic; let's talk about our something nice." We can absolutely do these things, and we should do these things. The more we regenerate and create in our little corners of the world, the more we each take care of our spaces, the better we will each feel, and the better each of us feels, the better all of us feel.



# my boundaries

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i will take care  
of myself first



i will not  
allow others  
to guilt or manipulate  
me into doing things  
i'm not comfortable with



i will stand  
up for myself  
and voice my  
opinions with  
confidence



i will not hold  
myself responsible  
for the things  
beyond my control



i will communicate  
openly and when i  
need to, assertively



i will not let  
my happiness  
depend on other  
people

I AM NOT PERFECT  
NOR WILL I EVER BE.  
I AM A WORK IN PROGRESS,  
AND THAT IS DEFINITELY  
GOOD ENOUGH.

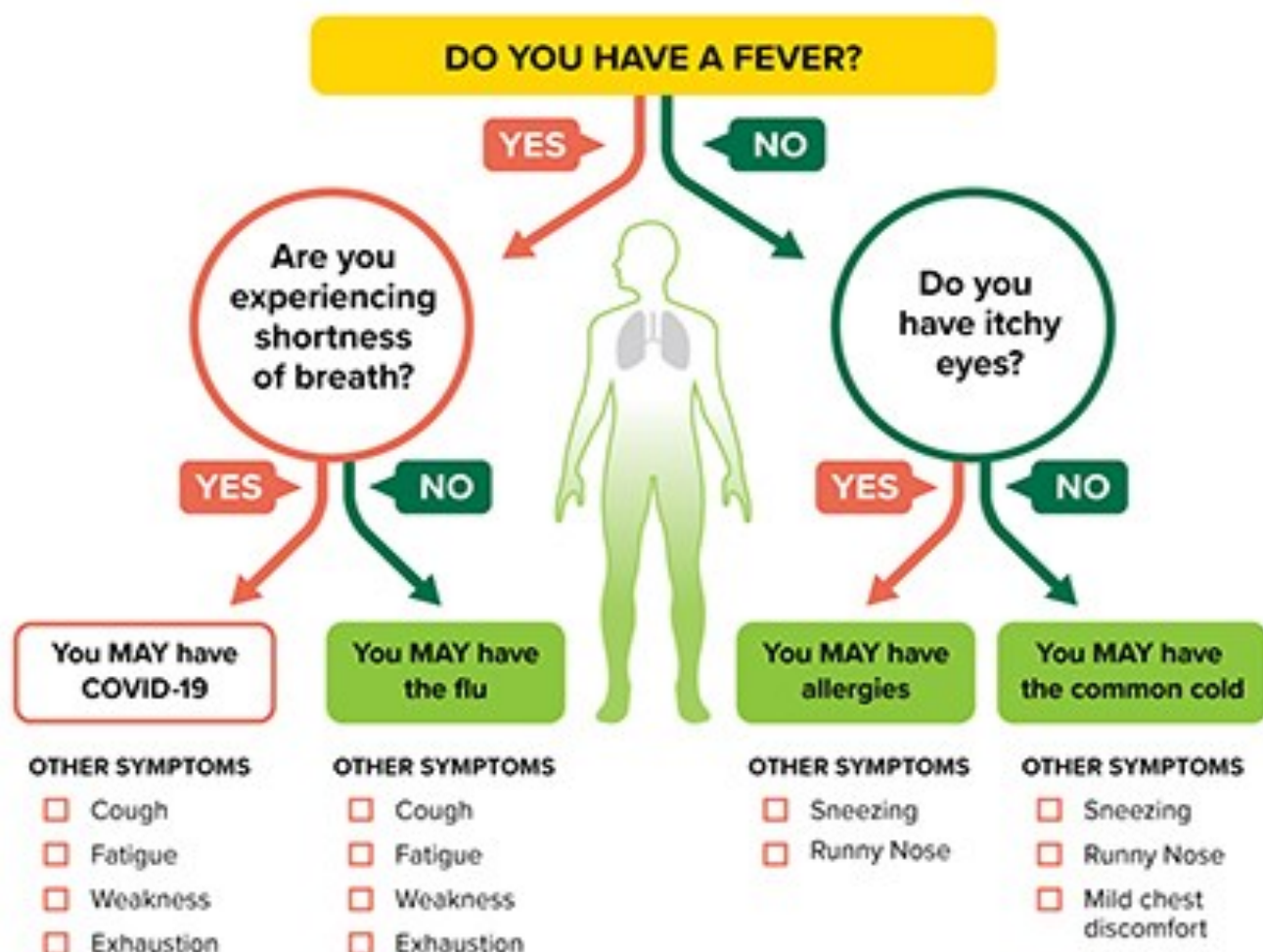
I ASPIRE  
TO BE A GIVER.  
A GIVER OF  
LOVE, A GIVER  
OF GOOD VIBES  
AND A GIVER  
OF STRENGTH.

## AFFIRMATIONS

- i am allowed to set healthy boundaries.
- it is necessary to protect myself & my energy.
- it is okay to speak up.
- it is okay to change.
- it is okay to move on.
- i am not my intrusive thoughts.
- i am inherently worthy & valuable.
- i am not defined by my productivity.
- it is okay to take a day off.
- i am free to make positive choices.
- i am more than what hurts.
- it's okay if all i did today was survive.



# Flu vs. Allergies vs. COVID-19



**These are COMMON SYMPTOMS,  
which may vary from person to person.  
Only a doctor can give you a diagnosis.**

[uab.edu/coronavirus](http://uab.edu/coronavirus)

**UAB MEDICINE**

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

# I am me: My declaration of self-esteem

In all the world,  
there is no one else exactly like me -  
everything that comes out of me  
is authentically mine,  
because I alone choose it -  
I own everything about me -  
my body, my feelings, my mouth,  
my voice, all my actions,  
whether they be to others or to myself -  
I own my fantasies, my dreams,  
my hopes, my fears -  
I own all my triumphs and successes,  
all my failures and mistakes.  
Because I own all of me, I can become  
intimately acquainted with me -  
by so doing I can love me and be friendly with  
me in all my parts -  
I know there are aspects about myself  
that puzzle me,  
and other aspects that I do not know -  
but as long as I am friendly and  
loving to myself,  
I can courageously and hopefully look for  
solutions to the puzzles and for ways  
to find out more about me -  
However I look and sound,  
whatever I say and do,  
and whatever I think and feel  
at a given moment in time is authentically me - If  
later some parts of how I looked,  
sounded, thought and felt turned out to  
be unfitting, I can discard that which I feel  
is unfitting, keep the rest, and invent  
something new for that which I discarded -  
I can see, hear, feel, think, say, and do.  
I have the tools to survive, to be close to others,  
to be productive, and to make sense  
and order out of the world of people  
and things outside of me -  
I own me, and therefore I can engineer me -  
I am me & I AM OKAY.

*By Virginia Satir*

## Things you can control:

1. Your beliefs
2. Your attitude
3. Your thoughts
4. Your perspective
5. How honest you are
6. Who your friends are
7. What books you read
8. How often you exercise
9. The type of food you eat
10. How many risks you take
11. How you interpret situations
12. How kind you are to others
13. How kind you are to yourself
14. How often you say "I love you"
15. How often you say "thank you"
16. How you express your feelings
17. Whether or not you ask for help
18. How often you practice gratitude
19. How many times you smile today
20. The amount of effort you put forth
21. How you spend/invest your money
22. How much time you spend worrying
23. How often you think about your past
24. Whether or not you judge other people
25. Whether or not you try again after a setback
26. How much you appreciate the things you have

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There is no growth without change.  
You've got to let go of some old stuff.  
And that can hurt. Often when I'm in  
the most pain, I realize it's coming  
from my trying to control everything.  
Or resisting the changes that come  
with the progress. But you see that  
light... that beautiful next level... &  
that's what you have to focus on.

—: ali brown :—