



The Community Connection

NEWS FOR SWEETWATER RESIDENTS

How to Navigate Challenges to Mental Health During Shelter-In-Place

It is well-known and accepted that mental health and addiction issues can be challenges many face. Whether this is our own journey of challenges, or if we are the family/close friends of one afflicted, it feels that you don't have to look far to come across someone attempting to shoulder such challenges.

The 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that 67.1 million (1 in 4) Americans 12 or older were binge drinkers, 53.2 million Americans (19.4% of the US) 12 or older were illicit drug users, and that approximately 47.6 million adults (4.2 million adolescents) suffered from a mental illness.

With the recent mandated stay-at-home orders, mental health and addiction experts are unanimous in their concerns that these numbers will increase. This is because our world, our community in essence is experiencing a prolonged traumatic experience. A leading expert and researcher on trauma, Dr. Diana Fosha, explains trauma as being 'the experience of unbearable emotional suffering in isolation'. Dr. Fosha goes on to say that the healing of trauma essentially happens in one's undoing of their aloneness, which is to say isolation.

Sequestered in our respective homes, we are experiencing uncertainty, fear of the unknown, and social isolation from our normal routines and friends and family. Which is to say, we are all experiencing trauma at varying levels. The following are tips for how we can incorporate into our lives what the research proves works to address challenges to our mental health.

5 Tips for Maintaining Sobriety and Mental Health

- **Have a community of support.** Seek help from a professional. Mental health therapists and psychiatrists have gone digital. Make sure to have as much digital face-to-face contact as possible with friends and family. Additionally, 12-step recovery groups are easily accessible via Zoom.

- **Have a spiritual practice.** Reconnecting with your faith, a meditation practice, walking outside, journaling. Seeking a way to determine 'HOW' you are to navigate this uncertainty. Recognizing that panic and anger will not help this, and to instead to feel empowered to get intentional with how you are showing up emotionally.

- **Keep to a daily schedule.** Finding a new normal routine and adhering to that. Have this schedule to make room for alone-time and exercise alone or with your family. Fresh air and outdoor time is a must.

- **Reconnect with yourself, loved ones, and your values.** This can be an opportunity to learn to reconnect with what is truly important to you. An opportunity to really identify or reconnect with your value system. Where there is crisis, those who really flourish are those who look for opportunities for transformation and resilience. Perhaps making and sharing a gratitude list with friends or within your family can be a practice.

- **Finding the courage to share honestly.** For those of us who believe that our safety and security is in being ok and having it all together, this pandemic is challenging that defense in an unprecedented way. In mental health and the healing from addictions, it is clearly known that healing ONLY happens by finding the courage to share one's vulnerabilities. It is in sharing our fears, our anxieties, our struggles that we can feel the most connected and supported by one another. And in this way, we also give others permission to share their vulnerabilities and fears.

Alana Smith, LCSW, LCDC is a licensed psychotherapist in Westlake. She specializes in working with those with addictions and their families. She also has specialty training in addressing and healing trauma. She can be reached at CentralTexasTherapy.com



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City of Bee Cave	www.beecavetexas.com
Travis County (General No.)	512-854-9020
.....	www.traviscountytexas.gov

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The *Community Connection* is mailed monthly to all Sweetwater residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to include information about their organizations in the newsletter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, recipes, special celebrations, and birthday announcements are also welcome.

To submit an article for the *Community Connection* please email it to sweetwater@peelinc.com. The deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the issue.

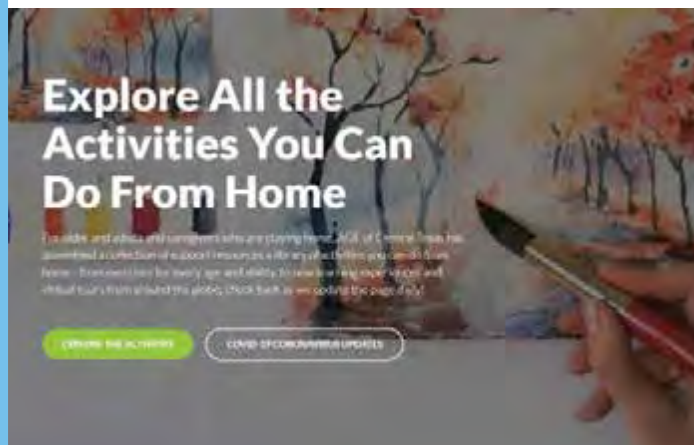
AGE of Central Texas Creates Online Library of At-Home Activities and Resources for Older Adults and Family Caregivers

Regional non-profit organization AGE of Central Texas has created an online library of activities, videos links, self-care resources, and virtual tours and webcams from around the globe – all in an effort to help older adults and family caregivers remain connected and active while they “Stay Home, Stay Safe” during the coronavirus pandemic.

“We know from research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that isolation is a major concern among older adults and caregivers, even before the pandemic,” said Annette Juba, Deputy Director for AGE of Central Texas. “We created this resource to help those who are at home to still remain active, both mentally and physically, and have an opportunity to have new virtual experiences.”

The extensive online listing includes more than 100 online experiences – including exercise videos for every ability, online tours and collections from museums from multiple counties, and custom-created videos from Central Texas artists and community members. The resources also include numerous videos and articles from AGE staff and experts to assist family caregivers as they “Stay Home, Stay Safe.” The online library will be updated with new content daily, Juba said, and can be access for free at <http://www.TinyURL.com/AGE-at-home-activities>.

For more information on the programs and resources provided by AGE of Central Texas, visit www.AGEofCentralTX.org or call (512) 451-4611.





Ocean Animal Word Search

Help *Ollie the Octopus* find the words listed below in the puzzle & circle them.

C	Z	V	U	H	F	H	S	H	A	R	K	J	I	N
A	Z	W	G	Z	S	S	I	C	I	O	A	T	T	M
N	E	E	H	L	C	I	L	T	U	Q	L	F	D	U
E	T	V	K	P	F	F	F	B	A	R	C	S	C	T
M	H	O	B	E	F	R	Y	V	G	D	U	G	W	G
O	T	J	B	K	A	A	N	I	G	P	R	I	W	B
N	J	G	A	O	R	T	I	I	O	A	H	V	K	D
E	J	O	U	G	I	S	P	T	H	S	E	A	J	F
S	D	B	N	L	X	X	C	M	I	P	I	O	G	A
Z	X	I	B	O	G	O	Q	F	Q	E	L	E	E	C
S	T	H	A	B	X	Z	Y	A	Q	L	L	O	L	X
S	B	V	I	S	H	L	C	E	E	R	N	A	D	L
L	Y	M	H	T	L	P	T	O	R	K	M	M	H	U
T	K	G	G	E	F	T	H	S	Q	U	I	D	Q	W
X	F	N	J	R	T	U	R	T	L	E	O	S	L	V

ANEMONE
CLAM
DOLPHIN
EEL
FISH

JELLYFISH
LOBSTER
OCTOPUS
SHARK
SQUID

OCTOPUS
STARFISH
STINGRAY
TURTLE
WHALE

Sudoku

The challenge is to fill every row across, every column down, and every 3x3 box with the digits 1 through 9. Each 1 through 9 digit must appear only once in each row across, each column down, and each 3x3 box.

		2						6
		1		7	4			8
			8					
			1		6	9		4
				5		7		
5		8						
	6			3		2		
				6	2			
	5		9				1	

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					9			6
					3	8	5	1
	6	2		1	5			
		7					6	
	2	1	9	7	6	3	8	
	3					1		
			4	5		9	7	
2	5	8	6					
4			3					

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