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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Take care of your mental health during COVID-19

Mental health is an essential part of overall health and wellness. At times like these, we face challenges that test us and impact our mental health. “It’s important to note that everyone responds to challenging situations differently,” said Mandy Kaisner, LPC, Solvista Health Chief Operating Officer. “While many people are experiencing anxiety and fear during the COVID-19 spread, it is also important to note that others may be experiencing loneliness, depression or even anger, in reaction to social distancing.”

In response to the need for social distancing, Solvista Health is delivering services through telephone and telehealth. Telehealth is talking with a mental health professional by a secure teleconference link from a personal computer or other device like a smartphone. “By delivering services remotely, we have increased our capacity to serve community members who may be experiencing symptoms of mental health or substance use issues during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Kaisner.

Community members can reach all Solvista Health offices 24/7 at, 719-275-2351, and schedule a time to speak to a counselor about the impacts being experienced. Individuals can also text the statewide crisis line by texting TALK to 38255.

While it’s important to know some of the common emotions people may experience with social distancing, it’s also important to remember that people are resilient. As community members, there can be widespread support through this tough time, it just needs to be done in different ways than usual. Consider checking in with friends and family using video or Facetime options.

Most importantly, remember the purpose of social distancing. Communities are doing this to protect the most vulnerable and to stop the spread of this virus in order to get back to normal.

Reminders and Ideas for Taking Care of Yourself and Your Family’s Mental Health:

- It’s typical to experience a range of emotions during times like these - anxiety, frustration, numbing. Many folks feel uncertain. You may experience changes in appetite, energy, sleep, and your ability to concentrate.
- Make sure you are meeting your basic needs. Eat regular meals, exercise, do your best with a good sleep routine. These are the foundation of feeling good. Often when we are stressed, these things go out the window.

- Reduce media exposure. The constant stream of updates can captivate us, but also leave us feeling inundated and overwhelmed. Schedule one or two times each day to get an update from a reliable source such as the Colorado Department of Public Health or the Centers for Disease Control and then move forward with your day.
- Control what you can. You may be anxious or frustrated about all the changes that are impacting daily life, such as, changes in travel plans, changes at work, or school schedule changes. You cannot change those things. Focus on what you CAN do, rather than on what you can't.
- Practice self-care. Do something comforting for yourself and your family, whether that is a home cooked meal, a bath or a walk by the river. Find a way to laugh each day, whether by watching stand-up comedy, your favorite movie or funny animal videos. Call a friend or family member and catch up.
- Avoid excessive alcohol or substance use.
- If you have kids, helping them through these challenging times is vitally important. Remember to:
 - Validate their feelings. Don't tell them not to worry if they are worried. Tell them you understand, and that it makes sense they are feeling worried or scared given all they are hearing or seeing.
 - Remind them that the grownups who love them are working to keep everyone safe and healthy.
 - Kids are experiencing confusion because, on one hand, they are told that this illness is not a danger to them and, on the other, events are canceled, and school schedules are disrupted. Remind them that the reason things are changing is that people in the community are trying to help each other stay safe and healthy.
 - Kids are really tuned in to adult conversations. Limit these when kids are around.
 - Answer questions as openly and appropriate as you can. If you don't know, that's okay to say. We're all still trying to make sense of this situation and we don't have all the answers.
 - Help kids to focus on what they can do, the things that are within their control.
 - Maintain routines as much as possible, and don't forget to play and have fun!

If you or a loved one are struggling to function in your day to day life, reach out for help. Solvista Health is available 24/7 by calling 719-275-2351 or text TALK to 38255.