



April 2, 2020, Updated April 3, 2020

**Hancock County Board of Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services
COVID-19 Communication Plan
Messaging Toolkit**

MAIN TALKING POINTS		
TALKING POINT	IMPORTANT ASSOCIATED MESSAGES	TANGIBLES
<i>Services are available in the community.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call local providers in the community for more information. For provider contact information, visit www.hancockhelps.org or www.yourpathtohealth.org. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call the agency. • Visit www.hancockhelps.org or www.yourpathtohealth.org. • Crisis Hotline 1-888-936-7116 • Crisis Text Line 4Hope to 741741 • National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
<i>Telehealth Services are available when you are not able to meet face to face.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of Telehealth Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mental health and addiction services that are offered through the phone, computer, or other electronic device. • Benefits of Telehealth Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Telehealth Services are not much different than calling a supporter or video chatting with a friend over Facebook. ○ Telehealth Services are a very helpful tool and resource. ○ Telehealth Services offer more options to connect with providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an agency provides Telehealth Services, someone will be available to help you get set up. • Telehealth Services may be received <i>without</i> a smart phone. • Testimonials – <i>“I have been using telehealth for over a year and I love it! It’s convenient and flexible because it fits into my schedule and is easy to access from anywhere. Best of all, I was able to find the right provider for me.” – Rachel (from FRC Facebook page)</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online and texting are often preferred by young adults and youth. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Misconceptions</i> of Telehealth Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Telehealth Services can only be accessed on a smart phone or computer. ○ Telehealth Services are not confidential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any communication device (traditional phone, smart phone, tablet, computer) can be used for Telehealth Services. ● Telehealth Services may be received <i>without</i> a smart phone, tablet or computer. ● Some Telehealth Services delivered electronically are protected through secure platforms. The provider will assist you with understanding which platforms are secure, and which forms require informed consent for use.
<p><i>Validate your feelings and the feelings of others.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feelings are not right or wrong, they are what they are ● Don't tell yourself or others what they should or should not feel ● The benefit of validating feelings helps you to work through them, rather than hold on to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "I understand that you are afraid." ● "I hear/see that you are angry." ● "You're in good company. Lots of people are afraid/angry/sad" ● "It does feel scary." ● "Being angry is a normal response."
<p><i>Take inventory of what you can and cannot control.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In this environment of COVID-19, there are many things you can control and do to help yourself and others around you. ● Those things that are outside of your control, are just that – things you cannot control. ● Try to focus on the things that you can do, it will help you remain calm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wash your hands frequently. ● Physically distance yourself from others. ● Cough in your elbow. ● Stay home if you are not feeling well. ● Stay home as much as possible. ● Limit media consumption and only use trusted sources. ● Limit COVID-19 conversations.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give yourself and others grace as we are not functioning at our normal or highest potential. • This is a good time to be creative.
<i>Maintain and create connections</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that you are physically distancing AND, • Make sure you are socially connected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to people – phone, electronically. • When possible, use video conferencing (such as Zoom or Google Hangouts) so you can see faces. • Use online support groups.
<i>Know how to create calm for yourself.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can find calm and peace in many different ways. • Find activities that help create balance in a time of unbalance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine, self-care, time to play, time to read. • Adults and young people – yoga, meditation, walking, deep breathing. • Create a sanctuary (safe space) for yourself and one for your kids – favorite chair, room, candle, book, music.

RECOGNIZING THE TRAUMA OF COVID-19/KEEPING CALM IN A CRISIS

MAIN TALKING POINT	IMPORTANT ASSOCIATED MESSAGES	TANGIBLES
<i>COVID-19 is a traumatic event that we are all experiencing together.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important thing is to feel safe and supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out if you are not feeling safe or supported. • Connect with someone who can help ground you to feel safe and supported. • If you feel like you do not have someone you can talk to you can call text 4Hope to 741741 or call the crisis hotline at 1-888-936-7116.
<i>Know the signs for when you or your loved ones are in need of greater help.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are services available to support your and your family, friends, and neighbors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You or your loved ones may be experiencing stress and anxiety at a higher level than ever before in your life. • It is ok to find support.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is ok to ask others (especially professionals) for help or advice. • Professional advice is available 24/7. • Crisis Hotline 1-888-936-7116 • Crisis Text Line 4Hope to 741741 • National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
Signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are not alone. • We all know someone. Reach out, offer support, and stay connected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in regular behavior – eating more or less, sleeping more or less. • Extreme feelings – extreme anger or sadness, being impulsive, risky behaviors, aggressive, overreactive.
Signs of suicidal ideation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know how to offer support to someone with suicidal ideation. • Asking someone if they are thinking about killing themselves is helpful, not hurtful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QPR – Question, Persuade, Refer • MHFA/ALGEE – Assess for risk of suicide or harm, Listen nonjudgmentally, Give reassurance and information, Encourage appropriate professional help, Encourage self-help and other support strategies • Crisis Hotline 1-888-936-7116 • Crisis Text Line 4Hope to 741741 • National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255

LIVING WITH A COVID-19 DIAGNOSIS

MAIN TALKING POINT	ASSOCIATED MESSAGES	TANGIBLES
<i>Obtain support when faced with a positive COVID-19 case in your home.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to know who will provide medical and emotional support to your household. • It is important to have accurate and current medical information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help is available – through phone lines and telehealth options (this includes medical and emotional help). • Call the Hancock County Resource Call Center 419-424-9999

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection is still important. Reach out to others. • Promote your physical and emotional health. • Follow the instructions from your healthcare provider.
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DEALING WITH GRIEF		
MAIN MESSAGE	ASSOCIATED MESSAGES	TANGIBLES
<i>Develop ways to process the loss we are experiencing.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are grieving the loss of routines, social connections, our security. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay connected and talk about how you are feeling, discuss this as a loss, and what struggles you are experiencing. • Find new routines. • Limit media consumption.
<i>Recognize the loss of a loved one while being physically distant is different than other types of loss.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know that this grief feels different because it is different. (due to physical distancing). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create virtual ways to grieve in ways we are accustomed to grieving. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zoom with family and friends to tell stories and remember our loved one. ○ Ceremonial letting go – balloons release, writing or creating something to let go of. • Meditate or pray. • Find laughter and joy in your memories of your loved one and in your day.
GRIEF MESSAGES (Grief Recovery Method/Ginny Williams, MA, LPCC-S)		
The Antidote to Isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During this period of social distancing and shelter in place, isolation and loneliness can be a challenge. When we experience any type of loss in our life, we are hardwired to seek connection. It is a myth of loss to <i>grieve alone</i>. Reach out to someone to talk to about your feelings of loneliness and isolation. Whether this is a trusted friend, an online 	

	recovery support network or a mental health professional you do not have to feel alone as we all go through this uncertain time together.
Forget About Being Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is ok to identify and acknowledge how you are feeling. It is ok to not be ok right now. Be honest with yourself and with those around you with how you are feeling. This is a positive coping strategy and one that will help your overall mental health.
Grief is an Emotional Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grief is the normal and natural reaction to loss. The feelings of sadness, disappointment, frustration or even anger about what is happening in our world right now is totally normal. We don't have to be ashamed of those feelings or avoid acknowledging them.
Loss and Grief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grief is the conflicting feelings caused by the end of or change in a familiar pattern of behavior. Right now, everything familiar to us has changed. It is normal and natural to have a wide range of emotions associated with that change.
Grieving People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes we just need to talk, vent or share our story and what we are experiencing. Sometimes the best thing we can do for someone is acknowledge we hear their pain and we are here to listen, sit while they cry, or even just be in the same place with them. We don't have to have any magical answers.
In Order to be Helpful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During this time of uncertainty, stress, anxiety and fear we are often depleted ourselves. We have to practice our own self-care in order to be present and available for all those around us.

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