

Wellness Newsletter

APRIL 2020: VOLUME 3

ROCKLAND COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH, BUILDING F, POMONA,
(845) 364-2391

DAILY GRATITUDE FOR YOUR WELL BEING

HOW GRATEFULNESS CAN REDUCE STRESS AND RE-WIRE OUR BRAINS



This has been an unprecedented time of challenges for us as workers, family members, friends and loved ones. We have encountered **hardships** in many aspects of our lives, down to trying to get **TOILET PAPER!** Many things feel **out of control** and to be honest, many things **ARE**.

With that said, now is a good time to identify what **IS** in our **CONTROL**. Our **thoughts**, **intentions** and **actions** are well within our control and the **GOOD NEWS** is that we get to **CHOOSE** these things. **WE** are in **CONTROL** of what we focus on including the **significance** and **meaning** that we assign to them.

WE design the wiring in our brain! With **EVERY** thought, intention and action we either create or reinforce neural pathways, which can create **positive** or **negative** influences on our well-being. **THIS** is what we are in **CONTROL** of. The **GREAT NEWS** is that at any point in time, we get to **choose** how we see, interpret and interact with the world around us. These moment-by-moment choices allow us to re-wire our brain by changing the structure of the neural pathways, this ability to change our brain is called neuroplasticity.

So how does **GRATEFULNESS** affect our **BRAIN?**

GRATEFULNESS utilizes neural pathways that positively affect heart rate, pain perception, and arousal levels. When we consistently reinforce these **POSITIVE** neural pathways through the practice of gratitude, we may be able to:

☀️ relieve stress and pain 🌺 improve health over time 🌞 help with depression

FIND 5 things to be **GRATEFUL** for and **EXPRESS IT!**

🌸 **LOOK** for beauty 🌺 **SEEK** opportunities to thank someone 🌺 **FIND** a way to help

How can I learn to be grateful in the midst of hardship?

ASK YOURSELF

☀️ Where can I **FIND BEAUTY?**

🌺 What can I do to **ENJOY OTHERS?**

🌺 What can I be **GRATEFUL** for?

🌞 How can I **EXPRESS** my **GRATEFULNESS?**

<https://positivepsychology.com/neuroplasticity/> , <https://www.mindful.org/what-the-brain-reveals-about-gratitude/>

Encouragement for the day

"Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more.

If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough"

- Oprah Winfrey

Laugh for the day

Why are the annoying servants staying in my home all day now?



Important Numbers & Information

Employee Assistance Program

Rockland County Employee Assistance Program: 845-364-2300, Monday to Friday: 9am to 4pm. Leave your name and the best number to reach you.

Crisis Phone Numbers

Behavioral Health Response Team (BHRT): 845-517-0400 or toll-free at 1-844-255-BHRT (2478) (available 24/7)

Crisis Text Line: Text GOT5 to 741741 An anonymous texting service (available 24/7)

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) (available 24/7)

Emotional Support Phone Numbers

Rockland County Dept of Mental Health COVID-19 emotional support line: 845-364-2955 (Monday to Friday: 9AM to 3PM)

New York State OMH COVID-19 Emotional Support Line: 1-844-863-9314 (available 8am to 10pm, 7 days per week)

Article of the Week

Coping with isolation during coronavirus

How can we stave off depression and loneliness at home? By: Marla Paul

Social distancing and self-quarantine have become the new normal amid coronavirus. And as people lose face-to-face contact with co-workers, friends and family, they may begin to feel lonely, depressed and anxious.

Northwestern Medicine experts explain why isolation affects your mood and offer strategies to cope with being stuck at home.

Stay connected

Judith Moskowitz is a professor of medical social sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine states:

"If you have to work at home, combat feelings of isolation by using web conferencing options so you can connect 'face-to-face' with co-workers. If you are stuck home with your kids, see it as an opportunity to connect with them — play games, read books or watch movies together. Creating small positive moments like these can help you cope better with the stress of having to stay home. Write down the positive moments in a day to help you keep a perspective and appreciation for all that is still good. Encourage your kids to do the same.

Call your friends and neighbors — especially if you know someone who lives alone. It helps to commiserate with others and gives you a sense of community that you're all in this together."

Use the light

Phyllis Zee, a professor of neurology, director of Northwestern Medicine Sleep Disorders Ctr states:

"It's essential to have plenty of exposure to outdoor light, particularly in the morning, for a strong immune system and positive mood. Light is one of nature's strongest signals, aligning our biological and social clocks with the sun. This syncing results in better sleep, more efficient metabolism and healthier cardiovascular and immune functions. In addition to these health benefits, light signals reach brain areas that regulate mood, and exposure to bright light during the day can boost mood and performance. Bright light exposure (preferably natural daylight from windows) or artificial lighting (above 500 lux), particularly in the morning and into the early afternoon, can help improve sleep, mood, physical health and general well-being. It's a cost-effective way to maintain health.

Dimming lights two to three hours before bedtime can help enhance sleep and allow the natural rise in melatonin secretion."

Be an active participant

Andrea Graham is an assistant professor of medical social sciences at Feinberg states:

"Being socially isolated can remove you from the things that provide joy and pleasure — friends, activities and exercise. We're social beings. It's important to interact with other people and feel connected to others for laughter, light heartedness and support. And participating in activities has an impact on our mood. Isolation and disruption to routine can create feelings of sadness and loneliness. To combat those feelings, schedule some at-home

workouts, which can boost your mood. Thankfully, we live in a digitally connected society. Use social media as a form of enjoyment and for support. Facetime, Skype and group chats can provide a way to connect with friends and family.

Keep doing activities that make you feel good — even though they're at home — to help you maintain a positive mental state. And maintain some kind of routine, still waking up at a consistent, reasonable time. It's good for your mood. It feels less aimless with that big disruption in routine."