

Parent/Caregiver Mental Health Needs During COVID-19: Findings from the Family Strengths Research Study

Parent/Caregiver Mental Health Needs During COVID-19:

Pandemics and natural disasters can lead to increases in mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, and substance abuse. COVID-19 has caused job loss, illness, financial strain, and lost childcare, placing a lot of stress on families. At the same time, physical distancing has decreased access to social supports and mental health resources important for managing these stressors.



How are Families in Western PA Coping with Their Mental Health

Needs? The [Family Strengths Survey](#) of parents and caregivers found that:

- **Less than 20%** of parents and caregivers felt they could care for their own mental, social, and emotional well-being as much as they would like.
- 13% of parents reported using more mental health/behavioral health services than usual during the pandemic and 9% reported needing additional mental health services than they are receiving.

Parents and caregivers must address their own mental health needs while caring for their children:

- *"I'm struggling with mental health issues while trying to be strong for my daughter."*
- *"Last week I caught myself ready to have three panic attacks. I haven't suffered from a panic attack in well over a year."*
- *"I feel uncertain, scattered, unfocused. I know my daughter is feeling my unease. It's hard sleeping. I wake up multiple times in the night. I think it's the stress of everything."*

These Programs Can Help Parents and Caregivers Meet Their Mental Health Needs:

Contacting your doctor is a great option. Your doctor can help care for many behavioral and mental health concerns and can connect you with a therapist or psychiatrist if needed. You can get treatment and services at home through video and phone calls right now (see back of sheet for potential locations).



[EMBRACE](#) Pittsburgh champions mental strength throughout the Pittsburgh region. EMBRACE provides online educational opportunities for Pittsburghers to learn and practice self-care, reduce daily stress, and be mindful, empathetic, and accepting of yourself and others:
<https://www.embracepittsburgh.org/resources/>

[Steel Smiling](#) bridges the gap between Black people and mental health support through education, advocacy, and awareness. They're working to expose every Black adult in Pittsburgh to a positive mental health experience that improves their Quality of Life by 2030. Their program Beams to Bridges provides paid weekly mental health training and wellness sessions for Black adults throughout our city. As a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic, they are sharing free sessions on social media (@SteelSmilingPGH) through their Digital Mental Health and Wellness Video Series. Every Wednesday in May, a Black mental health or wellness practitioner will facilitate an experience on topics such as stress management, mindfulness, and emotional regulation.



About this Study: The Family Strengths Study is a weekly survey of parents or expecting parents in Western PA. The study is a collaboration between UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh (CHP), University of Pittsburgh (Pitt), United Way, and the Allegheny County Health Department and Department of Human Services. This survey is part of the Pittsburgh Study and made possible through support from the CHP Foundation, Pitt Department of Pediatrics, The Grable Foundation, and The Shear Family Foundation. For more information, visit <https://www.pediatrics.pitt.edu/family-strengths-survey>



Who do I contact for more information? For more information please contact:

Family Strengths Survey team at PGHstudy@pitt.edu

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General Resources for Mental Health:

- Allegheny Family Network (AFN): <http://www.alleghenyfamilynetwork.org/> Chat line: 1-888-273-2361
- National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) Keystone PA <https://www.namikeystonepa.org/>;
- Mental Health America SW PA <https://mhaswpa.org/>;
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP): <https://afsp.org/chapter/western-pennsylvania>
- Inside Our Minds offers a monthly group remotely during this current time: <http://insideourminds.org/>
- Allegheny Department of Human Services (DHS)
Resources: <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Disabilities/Mental-Health/Services-For-Adults.aspx>



Crisis Prevention:

- resolve for Allegheny County, 1-888-796-8226: <https://www.upmc.com/services/behavioral-health/resolve-crisis-services>
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for other counties, 1-800-273-8255
- Crisis text line which is excellent for people to be able to talk to someone anonymously. Text START to 741-741

Telehealth Services (offering tele-therapy/tele-psychology):

- [Western PA Institute and Clinic \(WPIC\)](#): 412-624-1000 or 1-877-624-4100
- [Mercy Behavioral Health](#): 1-877-637-2924
- [Allegheny General Hospital](#): 1-877-284-2000 or 412-DOCTORS/412-362-8677
- [Persad Center](#): Specialize in LGBTQ needs: 412-441-9786 x 223
- [Persoma Counseling Associates](#): 412-823-5155
- [Milestone Centers](#): 412-243-3400
- [Vista Behavioral Health](#): 412-641-7016
- [Cognitive Dynamic Therapy Associates](#): 412-687-8700
- [Allegheny Mental Health Associates](#): 412-967-5660 x 1
- Register for Virtual Support Group [here](#) with Jewish Family and Community Services. Call (412) 904-5960 for a call back from a professional within 24 hours.
- Many support groups have gone online. For online AA meetings [click here](#).
- Free, downloadable [coronavirus anxiety workbook](#).

Apps for parents to help with stress, anxiety, sleep, depression.

- [Click here](#) for Calm and [click here](#) for additional free resources from Calm.
- [Click here](#) for free additional resources at headspace, which includes sections specifically for health care workers and teachers.
- [Click here](#) for free resources from Smiling mind.
- Free [UCLA Mindfu App](#) in English and Spanish.
- Free resilience resources from [Simple Habit](#).
- Mediation resources from [10 Percent](#).
- Self-care resources from [Sanvello](#).
- [Click here](#) for free resources from [Brain Manager](#).



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