



#LIBERTYSTRONG

Newsletter from your Clinical Team

In this issue:

- How weight gain impacts mental health and cognitive growth
- Coloring Sheet
- Exercise, Exercise, Exercise
- 5 ways to end Mental Health Stigma
- Myths & Facts about Mental Health
- Resources
- Social Anxiety
- Journaling Prompts for May

How are we doing and what would you like to see in the Clinical Newsletter?

We want to connect with you! Please let Angie Huber know what you would like to see in the newsletter. We will do our best to meet your request. Send any requests to aahuber@fcps.edu.

How weight gain impacts mental health and cognitive growth

By: Angie Huber, School Social Worker Liberty MS

Sixty-one **percent** of U.S. adults report undesired **weight** changes since the COVID-19 **pandemic** began.(Healthline) Are you or one of your family member's one of them? This society is struggling with obesity more than ever. In 2019, NHANES (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey) showed that **39.6 percent** of adults and **18.5 percent** of children ages 2 to 19 in America had obesity, and the State of Obesity report noted that "these are the highest rates ever documented by NHANES.". A person is considered to be obese when their body weight is 10% more than what is recommended for their body height and weight. Why did obesity increase more quickly during the pandemic? Numerous factors have contributed to weight changes: stress eating, food insecurity, access to health care, poverty, unsafe neighborhoods, virtual learning leading to limited movement, school closures and not having regular meals, no formal physical education, limited recess programs, limited afterschool and structured sports and limited opportunities to play outside safely.

How does sudden weight gain impact mental health and cognition? First, during weight gain, mental health struggles occur such as stress, depression and anxiety. Self esteem and confidence are often greatly impacting, adding to the challenges and struggles in motivation to lose weight leading to more depressive symptoms and sluggish thinking. Anxiety and depression can also affect the quality of a person's sleep and induce disordered sleep patterns, which again, can result in weight gain through slowing down the metabolism and increasing appetite. Obesity is among the easiest medical conditions to recognize but most difficult to treat. Many people will eat mindlessly and often make quick and poor food choices when having screen time contributing to weight gain. Children and teens who are overweight tend to have a lower self esteem and to be less popular with their peers leading to depression, anxiety and obsessive tendencies which also impacts their quality of sleep. Regular physical activity has been found to raise self-esteem, mental alertness, and reduce anxiety and stress as it triggers the production of endorphins, which ameliorate moods and act as pain relievers. Regular exercise can also be effective in treating sleep disorders, so depression and anxiety do not become worse. Reduced memory and executive functioning as well as an increase in impulsive behaviors are associated with obesity.

[Cont. page 4](#)

5 Signs You'll Reach Your Weight Loss Goal



DON'T TALK about your **GOALS.**

Your brain mistakes the
TALKING
for the
DOING.

COLLYOFINFOGEEK.COM

Enjoy this coloring page for stress relief!!!



Exercise, Exercise, Exercise

By: Joanna Wheeler, School Psychologist Liberty MS

Well, if there is one thing that is always talked about when discussing a healthy lifestyle, it is exercise. Whether you love it or hate it, it has some powerhouse benefits. The general guideline for “enough” exercise is about 30 minutes of moderate exercise daily. However, more intense, and longer durations of exercise may result in increased benefits.

The benefits of exercise! Let’s list them. This list is adapted from WebMD.

Exercise, particularly intense exercise, increases your ability to focus and pay attention.

Exercise decreases the symptoms of depression and anxiety! Exercise may help relieve the symptoms by reducing the damage and breakdown of brain cells. Exercise may help you learn and remember things, and don’t we all occasionally feel like we need help in that department. Aerobic exercise may help your hippocampus grow, which can improve memory and learning.

Exercise improves your brain’s flexibility! This is important because your brain’s flexibility or neuroplasticity is the ability of your brain to change when you learn and experience new things. Both weight training and aerobic exercise are thought to improve flexibility.

One of my favorite forms of exercise is walking. For one, it is free. It is low impact, and it is accessible even in pandemic times. My favorite app for walking is ***The Conqueror***. It costs about 30 dollars to join challenges, but I love seeing the route virtually through the app. You also get a neat medal for completing the challenges. I am currently doing The Appalachian Trail, which is basically going to take me 6 months or more. You can also create teams within the app and take on challenges together.

If you wanted an app to track your miles and speed, you would use a free app, called ***Map My Walk***. You could set goals for yourself regarding speed, distance or whatever you decide to come up with in the app. You can also connect with others. Happy walking!!!!



**“ A GOAL
without
A PLAN
is just
A WISH ”**

Ways to manage obesity in children and adolescents include:

- start a weight-management program
- change eating habits (eat slowly, develop a routine)
- plan meals and make better food selections (eat less fatty foods, avoid junk and fast foods); know what your child eats at school
- control portions and consume less calories
- increase physical activity (especially walking) and have a more active lifestyle—eat meals as a family instead of while watching television or at the computer
- do not use food as a reward
- limit snacking

Just like many other problems that a person wants to change, it means changing old habits and being consistent to see and continue to see results. Having a “group” of people to go through it with you is often helpful. While doing this it is always helpful to focus on building a person’s self esteem and focusing on positive strengths and qualities. It is said that it takes 5 positives to balance one negative! When mental health and cognitive concerns increase, these strategies are even more important.

Another simple strategy is the “5210 Every Day principle, developed by Maine Health.

- 5 Fruits and veggies daily
- Only 2 hours of screen time daily
- 1 Hour of physical activity daily
- 0 Sweetened beverage

Do not buy **processed foods** as snacks, such as sweetened drinks, chips and sweet baked goods. These should only be occasional treats, and not daily snacks.

- Offer fruits and veggies with each meal and snack.
- Have fresh cut veggies and fruits in the refrigerator for hungry children to easily “grab and go” instead of less nutritional snacks. Dips are always fun to have.
- Teach your child to cook

Shut off the TV, laptop or tablet, then:

- Play a board game.
- Do a physical activity with your child.
Have children help with household chores and reward their work with a fun activity you can do together.



Your students can check out Ms. Huber's google classroom to see many cool things to do, learn about or to use to cope!

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vSMKer3dWvdXMgM3d3sdf_nnsAKWIHjsrXeGtWCtcqkIQdmqao7b5gVQAUT16Nk1p9kED56KcuAqH0b/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=3000&slide=id.g8e48443adc_0_0



VIRTUAL ZEN DEN

[Sounds and Music](#)



[Meditation and Grounding Exercises](#)

[Visual Relaxation](#)

[Live Animal Cams](#)

[Yoga](#)

[Something Interesting](#)

[Pixar Short Film: La Luna](#)

[Pixar Short Film: Piper](#)

[Pixar Short Films: Day and Night](#)

[Pixar Short Films: Partly Cloudy](#)

[Art and Creativity](#)

[Games and Puzzles](#)

5 WAYS TO END MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

Did you know up to **1 in 5 children** experience a mental health disorder and half don't receive the treatment they need? Together, we can support children and stop the negative stigma around mental health.



Educate yourself and your children about mental health



Share real-life examples of people with mental health disorders



Explain mental health has a range of symptoms



Listen to and support others with mental health concerns



Share stories of overcoming mental health disorders

children's **health?**®

MINDFULNESS 5-4-3-2-1

5 things you can see

4 things you can touch

3 things you can hear

2 things you can smell

1 thing you can taste



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More resources that you may find helpful!

The Parent Resource Center (PRC) is excited to offer access to their library resources.

Their library is open for pick-up, on Wednesdays, by appointment only, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

How to Talk to Your Children About Body Safety

There are a lot of important conversations that we need to have with our kids, and how we treat our body and allow others to treat it, is one of them. It can be challenging to figure out where to begin and what is age-appropriate. This webinar is about how to talk to our kids about body safety and a program that you can utilize to support your effort.

Join us to learn more about the following:

- Program Overview: Body Safety Education Program for children
- Parent/Caregiver Body Safety Tips
- What to Look Out For, Potential Signs of Abuse
- What Can I do as a Safe Adult?

Resources for Families

Friday May 21, 2021 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Presented by Francesca Watson, Body Safety Program Coordinator, Fairfax County Department of Family Services.

[Register for How to Talk to Your Children About Body Safety](#)

Parent to Parent: Surviving and Thriving During a Second COVID-19 Summer

Are you searching for peer support, advice, encouragement, and resources? This webinar will offer families opportunities to learn from each other as they grow in their parenting skills. Parents build their own sense of competence and power by building relationships and connecting with other parents who share common experiences, successes, and challenges.

Discussion Highlights:

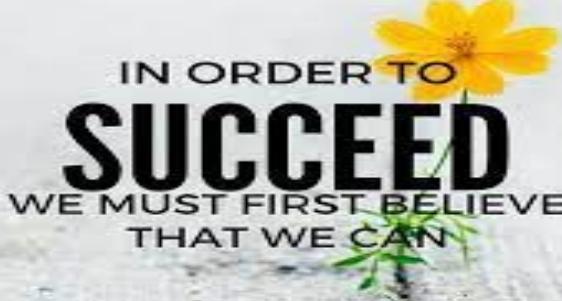
- Parent to parent connection
- Self-care for kids
- Navigating decisions and establishing stability in uncertainty (or maybe “sanity” is a better word than stability!)

Making plans and creating family fun in the unknown

Join Mary Elizabeth Fleming and Natalie Bailey, Fairfax County Department of Family Services Parenting Education Programs and FCPS Parent Resource Center Staff for this important webinar.

Thursday May 27, 2021 10 - 11:30 a.m. and 6:30- 8 p.m.

[Register for Parent to Parent: Surviving and Thriving During a Second COVID-19 Summer](#)



Try these activities for your student!

⇒ Liberty Middle School Afterschool Program

<https://libertyms.fcps.edu/activities/after-school-program>

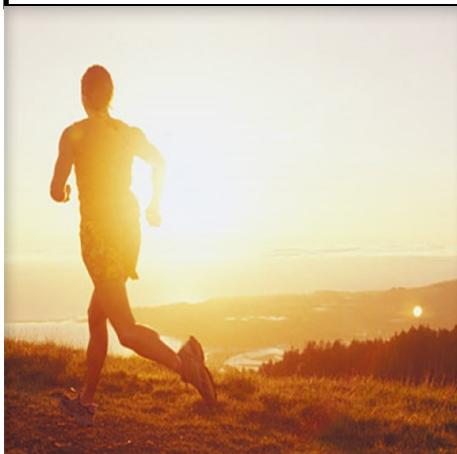
⇒ Fairfax County Park Authority Programs

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes>

For more social-emotional resources and lessons please visit the LS Clinical Team's website (see the link below works best in Google Chrome):

<https://sites.google.com/view/liberty-ms-clinical-team/mental-wellness-topics>

some new videos added*



Benefits of mental health education

1

Provides a better understanding of the effects of mental illness

2

Helps eliminates the negative stigma around mental health

3

Makes it easier to identify signs of mental illness

4

Students have more tools to help others cope

Resources:

If you or someone you care about is in crisis, please call [911](#) or access one of the mental health resources below:

- ⇒ *Reach out to a trusted adult (parent, counselor, teacher, coach, etc.); <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk>*
- ⇒ *Text NEEDHELP to 85511 for the [Crisis Link](#) Hotline at or call them at 703-527-4077*
- ⇒ *Chat online with a specialist at [CrisisChat.org](#) or [ImAlive.org](#)*
- ⇒ *Call an emergency mental health center at 703 573-5679 (Merrifield Center), 703-536-2000 (Dominion Hospital), or 703-289-7560 (INOVA emergency services)*
- ⇒ *CR2 – 844-627-4747*
- ⇒ *Go to the nearest emergency room at your local hospital*

Call 911

MYTHS & FACTS about MENTAL HEALTH



Myth

Children don't experience mental health problems



Fact

Even very young children may show warning signs of mental health concerns. Early support can help a child before mental problems interfere with other developmental needs

Myth

People with mental health problems are violent and unpredictable



Fact

The majority of people with mental health problems are no more likely to be violent than anyone else. In fact, many people with mental health problems are highly active and productive members of their communities

Myth

Personality weakness or character flaws cause mental health problems



Fact

Mental health problems have nothing to do with being lazy or weak. Many factors may contribute, including:

- Physical illness, injury, or brain chemistry
- Life experiences (trauma or abuse)
- Family history of mental health problems

Myth

I can't do anything for a person with a mental health problem



Fact

Friends and loved ones can help by:

- Learning and sharing the facts about mental health
- Reaching out and helping them access mental health services
- Treating them with respect
- Refusing to define them by their diagnosis or using labels like "crazy"

Mental health problems can affect anyone

1 in 5



With the appropriate help many people

get better



Americans will be affected by a mental health problem in their lifetime

and recover completely

Mental Health is a Serious Topic, Let's Talk About It

Join the conversation about mental health on Twitter:

#mentalillnessfeelslike
#stigmafree



www.nami.org



www.mentalhealthamerica.net

References:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved April, 2016, from: www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/myths-facts/.
- National Institutes of Health. Retrieved April 2016 from: www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/prevalence/any-mental-illness-among-adults.shtml



Tri-City Medical Center

Tricitymed.org | 855.222.8262

Social Anxiety Following the Pandemic

Is your child experiencing the symptoms below. It may be social anxiety. Since social interactions have been limited over this past year, the thought of returning to social gatherings may cause symptoms of social anxiety to flare up. Considering one-third of Americans have shown signs of clinical depression or anxiety, there are a lot of people who currently require support. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can be an effective treatment for social anxiety. If you notice more than three of the symptoms below, you may want to begin to inquire more. Mindfulness strategies can also be effective.

Common Physical Symptoms of Social Anxiety



BLUSHING



FEELING OF THE MIND GOING BLANK



MUSCLE TENSION



SWEATING



QUICKENED HEARTBEAT



UPSET STOMACH



TREMBLING



LIGHTEADEDNESS



SHORTNESS OF BREATH



DIZZINESS



NAUSEA

Counseling is often a good approach to help people to work through struggles that they are having in their life. Many feel comfortable with the idea of counseling and many do not feel comfortable. One of the benefits of counseling is that it can help you to find solutions or to problem solve more quickly than without it. However, some still may not be comfortable and to add to the challenges of becoming comfortable with the idea of counseling, during COVID, it is difficult to find counselors who are not meeting virtually, as some do not feel comfortable with meeting virtually. A good alternative is to use journaling. Here are some journal prompts for May.



JOURNAL PROMPTS FOR MAY

May Journal Prompts

1. What's a compliment you've received lately?
2. Write 5 words that describe you
3. Did you meet anyone new today?
4. What is challenging about your life right now?
5. Who has been your biggest support in the last year?
6. Draw a pie chart of your favorite foods.
7. What is something you do exceptionally well?
8. Write about your mother.
9. What task have you been putting off?
10. How far did you walk today?
11. How have you grown this week?
12. Write about a childhood friend?
13. Fill a page with your favorite inspirational quotes.
14. What moment are you most proud of this week?
15. What is your favorite family story?
16. What color influences you?
17. What sounds did you experience today?
18. What dream do you hope to pursue in the next year?
19. Write about your favorite childhood movie.
20. Write a haiku about your day.
21. How did you spread kindness today?
22. What is the most fascinating place you've visited?
23. What knowledge are you grateful for?
24. What item will you cross off your bucket list next?
25. What is your superpower?
26. What knowledge would have been helpful a year ago?
27. Draw a map - real world or imaginary.
28. What is something you'd like to let go of?
29. What healthy choices have you made this week?
30. Who are you honoring today?
31. What one goal do you have for June?



www.TextMyJournal.com

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