



Washington Mental Health Counselor Association

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. As a fellow front line professional WMHCA is reaching out to you, our members to offer support in these trying times. We have some events that are coming up that help support mental health professionals.

Monthly Virtual Happy Hour

- **Theme:** May is Mental Health Awareness Month: How are you fighting the stigma? Come join us for some relaxation and self-care as we get together to mingle and catch up!
- **When:** Tuesday May 4th, 2021 at 6:15 p.m. (Happy Hours are about an hour, and reflect a real time event where you can show up at your leisure and leave when you need to. These are very informal!)
- **Who:** Any mental health professional that wants to connect with others around the state. WMHCA membership not required, but welcomed!
- **Where:** We've cut out the commute, parking, and cost of fancy drinks and apps. Join us at our recurring [Zoom Link](#). RSVP to get reminders for upcoming events.
- **Cost:** Free!!

Weekly ONE 4 ME Mindful Practice Group for Mental Health

"ONE 4 ME" is an invitation to pause, rest and tend to your own health and well being, taking time to check in with yourself and to care for yourself too. Cameras on or off, eyes opened or closed. Come early or late with microphones on mute. All are welcome to step off the busy treadmill of doing for others and enjoy *"ONE 4 ME"* – an hour of slowing down the pace of life, turning attention inward, tending to one's own health and well-being.

By design the group ends at 1:50 creating space for a gentle transition from the inner landscape of being with oneself to the well-known outer landscape of doing

for others at work, home and beyond.

When: Wednesdays from 1-1:50 PM on Zoom

Where: Practice from the quiet comfort of your home or office

What you need: A quiet space, a yoga mat and comfortable, loose fitting clothing for mindful movement.

Register [Here](#)

Other Things You Can Do For Self-Care

- Create a self-care plan that is practiced on a daily basis that includes activities such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, etc.
- Be kind to yourself—avoid self-criticism and focus on the values of your vocation.
- Continue to be who you are—compassionate and caring.
- Stay (virtually) connected with colleagues, friends, and family by phone, text, email, or video-chat.
- Reach out to another professional if you need extra support.



From AMHCA

WE ALSO WANT TO GIVE SALUTE TO FRONT-LINE PROFESSIONALS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ADDRESSING THEIR MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.

Mental Health Professionals, across the nation, recognize the great stress that many of our first responders and active medical and other healthcare professionals are experiencing. As mental health specialists, our education, training, experiences, and competency puts us in the best position to support you and your fellow colleagues with maintaining your mental health status — with compassion, empathy, and skill.

Mental health providers want to take the burden off—as much as possible—of those first responder and medical, and other healthcare professionals within your association or organization who continue help others fight against and treat the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) that is severely impacting everyone's lives and livelihood. We want to assist you in the best way that we can during the COVID-19 crisis and that is by ensuring that your members are continuing, developing, and maintaining healthy habits for their emotional, mental, and cognitive wellness and well-being.

The mental health specialists/professionals with the training, expertise, and aptitude to aid first responders include clinical mental health counselors (e.g., LPCs, LCMHCs), psychologists, social workers (LCSWs), and marriage and family therapists (MFTs). They are trained, experienced, and specifically licensed to address individuals experiencing mental, emotional, physical, and cognitive distress.

Because the novel coronavirus has so many unknowns, it can be quite anxiety-provoking. As troubling as it is for the general population, it is chronically disturbing for first responders and medical specialists as well. Professionals who experience repetitive distressing experiences commonly develop the snowballing effects of trauma, secondary traumatic stress, and vicarious trauma resulting in signs and symptoms of anxiety, depression, or other physical effects. In the face of an unrelenting crisis, many health care professionals have a tendency to emotionally disconnect from others. Unfortunately, this “flight, fight, or freeze response” is an entirely ineffective protective coping mechanism. Emotionally, mentally, and physically disconnecting yourself ultimately alienates others when they are in a place, where caring support is genuinely and justly needed. Isolating and repressing our emotions is often a precursor to other serious mental concerns, such as compassion fatigue, burnout, secondary traumatic stress, etc.

As a nation, we all continue to deal with effects of COVID-19. Remember, you are not alone. Many mental health professionals, some are even providing free services, are available to talk to your members within the organization you represent.

Often, just a phone call, text, email, video chat, or even snail mail can be encouraging and immensely beneficial. There are many resources listed on [AMHCA's](#) website.



WMHCA | 11410 NE 124th St., Kirkland, WA 98034

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