

## Maintaining your Mental Health Support Team In Isolation

During this period of isolation as we all fight covid-19, the slogan “We are All In this Together” has been used over and over. If you are at home by yourself or even with another person, it may still be difficult to see the others who are available to help us handle the fears, anxieties, and challenges to our mental health. Under these new and frightening circumstances, it is normal to have fears and anxieties and it may be difficult for us to identify the others who can be on our team to help us cope with these challenges to our whole sense of self.

The Canadian Mental Health Association has provided a Tool Kit for mental health week. One article in this kit is a Social Distancing Survival Guide which might be helpful to you to feel close to your support group even when you can't be physically together. You can read the whole article at <https://mentalhealthweek.ca/your-social-distancing-survival-guide/>. Here are a few of their suggestions.

**Make connecting with other part of your routine.** Set a time or several times for social connection time to check in with others.

**Make a date** for conversation by phone or email to invite someone to a video chat, or phone date.

**Schedule in meetings with others.** Just like dentist or doctor's appointments, social interactions need a space on our agenda.

**Let your vulnerability show.** If you are lonely or needing interaction; let others know. And.... Be honest about how you are feeling especially if you are not doing well.

**Share kindness and generosity.** Kindness is a stress reducer... Send messages of thanks and gratitude to others who have been with you.

**Listen well to each other.** We all need to learn how to listen well in order to hear the other's situation.

**Reconnect with others beyond your immediate group.** Think of persons who have been part of your social support group in the past and reconnect with them.

As Christians we recognize the importance of presence. We recognize that God is present in each person. In Christ we have been given so much and we are called to share that love and hope with others. We too have a role to build a team of support for our own and other's mental health during this period of isolation. Prayerfulness allows us to hold hope in a time of uncertainty. As we pray for others and they pray for us we share the strength of building hope even when all around us is filled with uncertainty.

Dear Lord,

When my heart and body grieve the loss of routine and human interaction, your love and hope surround me with comfort and stills my anxiety. Be with us all and help us do our part to fight this plague.

Dr. Dianne Kieren, Chair, ABT SYNOD CARE Ministry Team and member of Hosanna Lutheran Church