

The RESOURCE

A publication to increase awareness of mental health and substance use disorder issues in our community.

We are here for you

It's a challenging time for us all as we face the coronavirus pandemic. We know that difficult times are ahead, and we will do everything we can to ensure that necessary services and supports are available. Thank you to all the public health and human service employees, healthcare workers, and first responders who are continuing to help our residents during this stressful time.

As always, your mental health is important! Be sure to keep all of your healthcare appointments. You may receive care in new ways, like over the telephone or by video chat. Our Portage County agencies are open. Call each agency directly or check their Facebook pages & websites for latest updates on services.

Children's Advantage: 330.296.5552
Coleman Professional Services: 330.296.3555
Family & Community Services: 330.677.4124
Townhall II: 330.678.3006



For health information on the coronavirus, visit www.coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH

We encourage you to reach out to each other - it is important that we maintain appropriate physical distance but we can still remain socially connected through phone calls, facetime, email, and social media.

Frank Hairston Joins the Board



Long-time Portage resident Frank Hairston joined the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County in the fall of 2019. The Board is comprised of 18 volunteer members, with 10 being commissioner appointments and 8 appointed through the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services.

Volunteering and serving his community have been an integral part of Hairston's life. Through the years, he has volunteered with the McElrath and Skeels communities, the Ravenna Area Chamber of Commerce, Ravenna Rotary, Ravenna Jaycees, Portage County NAACP, Community Action Council, Option 4 at Maplewood Career Center, the Portage County Black Caucus and the Portage County Access Program.

Hairston retired from the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority where he was the marketing director for seventeen years. He now considers himself a fulltime community navigator.

"I am a messenger to the community and a voice for those who need it – especially the children."

Drug prevention and advocating for the community have been primary concerns of Hairston's. His involvement with the Mental Health & Recovery Board began several years ago when the commissioners convened a citizen task force to discuss the overcrowding at the jail. His was a constant voice for more drug and alcohol prevention classes for the children.

"We are extremely honored that Frank chose the Mental Health & Recovery Board as one of the organizations he will be serving in his retirement," said John Garrity, PhD, executive director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board. "He is well-known and highly respected throughout Portage County. He has great knowledge of the community and is always willing to help take action where needed."

"Most of the time, people think about their health, but don't think about mental health," said Hairston. "However, mental health is an important part of life."

Prevention Education Continues

Townhall II and Portage County School Districts Continue to Teach Health and Wellness During Closures

Schools may be closed, but the Portage County school districts and Townhall II are still delivering important drug prevention lessons to students.

Townhall II's Prevention and Education Department provides education and activities essential to improving critical life skills and social/emotional learning such as decision-making, refusal skills, goal setting, healthy friendships, and feelings recognition and management.



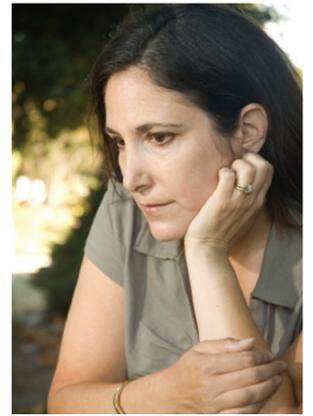
"All the school districts have been overwhelmingly supportive in helping Townhall II make sure that Portage County students stay informed and educated not only in the common core areas, but also in the areas of social and emotional learning, during a very stressful and challenging time," commented Sarah McCully, Director of Prevention & Outreach at Townhall II.

Townhall II Prevention Specialists are creating "virtual type" lessons through fun power points that the kids can watch in addition to interactive games that are similar to the workbook pages that would have been done in class. The lessons will be emailed to the classroom teachers on the day the specialists normally would have been presenting programming such as "Too Good for Drugs," "Project Alert", "Personal Body Safety" and "Stand Up" in that particular classroom. Each classroom is unique, and adjustments will be made to fit the learning style of the students.

"This is a great time for parents to get involved and talk to kids about not using alcohol, marijuana, and e-cigarette products," stated John Garrity, PhD, executive director of the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Portage County. "Studies show that children of parents who talk to them about the dangers of drugs and alcohol are less likely to use."

Programming is funded by the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County. Townhall II provides counseling and treatment for substance use disorders, gambling addiction, prevention, education, advocacy, the 24-hour helpline, and is located in Kent. Contact 330.678.3006 for information and appointments.

Managing Coronavirus-related Stress



During this time of uncertainty, many of us are experiencing high levels of stress & anxiety. Follow these tips to help you cope during this stressful time. Also know that mental health professionals are available to help.

Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of COVID-19.

It is important to get good information to help you prepare and respond, but don't overwhelm yourself or your family. Get information from a trusted source. Refer to coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634). Our local health departments at www.portagehealth.net or www.kentohio.org/153/Health

Your Mental Health is important!

Keep all of your behavioral healthcare appointments. You may receive care in new ways, like over the telephone or even by video chat. Call your behavioral healthcare provider directly for more information about appointments.

Manage Coronavirus-related stress.

- Unplug from time to time to take a break from the news and social media.
- Focus on things you can control, such as practicing the recommended prevention measures – hand washing, avoiding touching your face, staying home as much as possible, and keeping 6 feet distance from others.
- Take time to do things you enjoy like walking outside, reading, or watching funny movies and shows.
- Care for your body. Exercise, meditate, stretch, take deep breaths. Stick to your sleep schedule and try to eat healthy.
- Maintain a routine. Many people are working from home now. Children are home from school. Establish daily schedules to keep everyone grounded.
- Reach out to others. Talk to friends and families about your concerns, and be there for others when they need someone to talk to also.

Recognize signs of distress:

- Feeling hopeless or helpless.
- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety or fear.
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images.
- Physical reactions – headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Anger or short-temper.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

Call your healthcare provider if your feelings overwhelm you for several days in a row.

Remember:

Stress, anxiety, fear, and strong emotions are normal in times of distress or crisis. Remind yourself and others that these feelings will fade.

Try this!

4-7-8 Breathing

1. Start by putting the tip of your tongue to the top of your mouth just behind your two front teeth.
2. Breathe in through your nose for four seconds.
3. Hold your breath for a count of seven seconds.
4. Breathe out through your mouth for a count of eight seconds. Try to make a "whooshing" sound as you do this.
5. Start again immediately. Breathe in for a count of four and continue through the cycle 4-5 times before returning to your normal breath for the most benefit.

**Anxious? Stressed?
Need to talk?
Call the Portage Helpline
330-678-HELP
or text "4hope" to 741741**

Mental Health & Addiction Services Providers

Portage County Agencies are open.

Children's Advantage: 330.296.5552

Coleman Professional Services: 330.296.3555

Family & Community Services: 330.677.4124

Townhall II: 330.678.3006



www.mental-health-recovery.org

Maintain Your Wellbeing While Working From Home

Working from home is one of the many adjustments people and organizations are having to make during the coronavirus pandemic. Here are some tips to ease the stress.

Show compassion for your co-workers

These are unprecedented times and people are experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety. The future of our jobs, our companies, and the economy is uncertain. It's not surprising that tensions may be rising with colleagues over the past few weeks.

Make an effort to be kind and show compassion. Accept that different people cope differently. We're all adjusting - worried about family members and health concerns. Some people may remain positive and upbeat while others may lose their patience.

Many of us are new to working remotely and this is adding additional pressures to an already stressful time. Realize it may take longer for your colleagues to complete a task or return an email.

Your new workday

First, you'll need to create a dedicated workspace - whether you have a home office, the dining room table, or a section in your basement. It may be trial and error at the beginning while you get your remote connections running and figure out how to use conference calling software. It's okay, give yourself a break!

It may be fun to hang out in your pajamas for the first few days, but it's a good idea to get dressed to create a sense of normalcy. Start each day with a to-do list to help prioritize and stay focused. Crossing completed items off provides a daily sense of accomplishment.

Add two 15 minute breaks into your schedule for you to get up and move. Take a walk outside. Shoot some baskets if you have a hoop in your driveway. Make a workout course in your house - do 20 jumping jacks in the dining room, 10 squats in the living room, go up and down the stairs. Physical exercise is good for your mental state.



Children Can Be Distractions

Another source of stress for many workers is the fact their children are home now that the schools are closed. Finding daycare is a challenge now. If you have school-aged kids, they should be able to direct themselves and be occupied with schoolwork for several hours each day. Have them on a schedule that compliments yours.

Realize that this is a temporary situation, and these are unprecedented times. Consider relaxing screen time rules for the time being. It can be more difficult with younger children. You'll need to plan your workday around their napping and sleeping schedules. Plan ahead and have some craft projects and puzzles ready to pull out when boredom hits.

Avoid the TV & trips to the refrigerator

Turn the TV off. You need a break from the constant hum of the news. Stress eating is common and understandable, but it will end up causing more distress. Have healthy snacks easily accessible - a veggie tray, popcorn, and fresh fruit.

Make use of your former commute time

Use time you would have been driving to and from work for selfcare. End your workday with stress-relief exercises such as stretches and deep breathing. Put on some meditation music, close your eyes, and relax for a few minutes.

Connect with others

We are keeping away from each other physically, but we shouldn't be isolating ourselves socially. Reaching out to people you trust is one of the best ways to reduce anxiety, depression, loneliness, and boredom. Add sending a funny text, making a phone call, or facetime a friend to your daily to-do list.

We're all in this together!

**Anxious? Stressed?
Need to talk?**

**Call the Portage Helpline
330-678-HELP
or text "4hope" to 741741**

Mental Health & Addiction Services Providers
Portage County Agencies are open.

Children's Advantage: 330.296.5552
Coleman Professional Services: 330.296.3555
Family & Community Services: 330.677.4124
Townhall II: 330.678.3006

Mental Health & Recovery Board
OF PORTAGE COUNTY
www.mental-health-recovery.org