

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes that mental health is an essential part of overall health. It is just as important as physical health and should be given the same priority in diagnosis and treatment. The COVID 19 epidemic has exacerbated mental health issues through isolation and the accompanying anxiety.

Depression and anxiety are among the more common mental health conditions. Many of these cases can be improved with treatment. Depression causes distress and suffering and often aggravates other chronic illnesses. It is often left untreated, though it is usually treatable. The Affordable Care Act requires most health insurance policies and Medicaid to cover mental health services. Contact your individual carrier for more specific information. Medicare has coverage for mental health services, including a yearly depression screening. More specific answers as to the extent of coverage under part B can be found at <https://www.medicare.gov/what-medicare-covers/what-part-b-covers>. For those with Medicare advantage plans go to <https://www.medicare.gov/what-medicare-covers/what-medicare-health-plans-cover>. You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE. Many county and state resources offer sliding scale coverage for those without insurance.

There are many sources for finding a mental health practitioner. Your medical doctor should be able to refer you to one. The State of New Jersey and Bergen County offer resources for help both via phone and the internet. Free, confidential support is available to New Jersey residents seven days a week from 8AM to 8PM at New Jersey Mental Health Cares 1-866-202-HELP (4376.) In a crisis, help is available twenty four hours a day at 201-262-HELP (4376.) Treatment is also available at West Bergen Mental Health Care in Ridgewood at 201-688-7098. These and other sources can be found listed at <https://www.co.bergen.nj.us/health-promotion/2019-novel-corona-virus> . Scroll down to Mental Health Resources and then to Bergen County Community Mental Health Resource List. When you click on this, you will be directed to a comprehensive list of available resources. Services for the deaf and hard of hearing are available at ACCESS, of St. Joseph's Healthcare system via videophone at 973-870-0677 Monday to Friday from 9:00 AM 5:00 PM.

There is no reason to suffer in silence. If you need help, please reach out. Many of us will experience a mental health issue sometime. And like physical illness, it is best to get diagnosed and treated.