

## **For Immediate Release**

**5/1/2020**

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**May is Mental Health Month**, and it has never been more important than this year. Awareness of mental health and wellness is not just for the one in five people with a mental health concern in any given year. As we all try to grapple with the impact of the coronavirus on our daily lives, all of us are experiencing some degree of isolation, loneliness, stress and anxiety.

In years past, the Mental Health Focus Group of Door County has typically hosted a community event featuring a speaker or film discussion highlighting a mental health topic in May. This year, despite the need to practice social distancing, the group has come up with some other great activities to get the community involved and to shine a light on mental health.

- ❖ **Thursday, May 7** is National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day. We’re calling all youngsters – and the young at heart – to “Chalk It Up to End Stigma!” Let’s color our neighborhood driveways and sidewalks with positive messages about mental wellness, words of thanks for the helpers among us, and cheerful pictures to instill hope and joy in the midst of loneliness. We encourage you to send a photo of your chalk creation to [cami@unitedwaydc.com](mailto:cami@unitedwaydc.com), with subject line “chalk drawings”, and we may post it at #Door County Mental Wellness. **Creativity supports mental wellness!**
- ❖ **Friday, May 15 at 6:00**, join us for a community-wide Front Porch Gathering to remind us “We’re All in This Together”. Turn your porch light on in support of mental health, and gather in front of your homes to safely connect with your neighbors. **Connections support mental wellness!**
- ❖ The week of May 17-23, make cards and write letters to individuals isolated in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, or a senior citizen feeling lonely at home.\* **Supporting others supports mental wellness!**
- ❖ The week of May 24-30, write heartfelt thank you notes to our selfless health care workers and first responders.\* **Gratitude supports mental wellness!**

*\* Mail cards and letters directly to individuals or facilities, or send to or drop off at the Door County Aging and Disability Resource Center, 916 N. 14th Ave., Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235, and we’ll help with delivery. [If dropping off at the ADRC, please call ahead (920-746-2372) to be sure someone is available to meet you at the door.]*

If you or someone you know needs some extra support during this time, there are resources available.

The Door County Emergency Support Coalition (DCESC) has implemented the Mental and Emotional Support Helpline (MESH), comprised of volunteers with experience in human services, counseling or social work, is available to reach out to those who request NON-EMERGENCY assistance and support with anxiety, loneliness, isolation, fear, grief, and other

emotional responses to the COVID-19 crisis. MESH volunteers are available most days from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 pm. To request mental and emotional support for COVID-19 and other available resources, contact DCEC at <https://doorcountypulse.com/tag/covid-19> or call 920-421-9111 for Northern Door or 920-746-6927 for Central and Southern Door.

The Department of Health and Human Services also offers supportive contacts, as well as information and referrals, ongoing counseling, and case management supports for those who need it. Call 920-746-7155 to access these services. **For 24/7 help in a mental health crisis, call 920-746-2588.**

The tools each of us uses to keep us mentally healthy will be unique. But the Mental Health Focus Group of Door County and Mental Health America want everyone to know that mental illnesses are real, and recovery is possible. Finding what works for you may not be easy but can be achieved by gradually making small changes and building on those successes.

For more information, visit “Door County Mental Wellness” on Facebook, or Mental Health America at [www.mhanational.org/may](http://www.mhanational.org/may), [#Tools2Thrive](https://twitter.com/Tools2Thrive).