



In The News

Back in May, Mental Health America (MHA) screened 211,000 individuals [online](#) to determine if they were experiencing symptoms of various mental health conditions. Of those 211,000 individuals, 88,000 screened positive for anxiety or depression, as a result of COVID-19. The demand for substance use disorder and mental health services is predicted to continue to increase, as we continue to deal with the pandemic ([MHA, 2020](#)).

MHA President and CEO, Paul Gionfriddo, has commented on this troubling trend and called for policymakers to act with urgency to provide relief. The recent expansion of telehealth services has provided many vulnerable communities, who have traditionally lacked access to care, with lifesaving services and treatment. Such communities include those living in rural areas or other places that experience provider shortages, and/or those who lack access to transportation and other resources.

In Maryland, the Maryland Parity at 10 Coalition and the Maryland Behavioral Health Coalition have formally recommended that policymakers continue to allow flexible telehealth practices to take place. They argue this is necessary in order to ensure equal access to high quality mental health and substance use disorder treatment and remain in compliance with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act ([Parity at 10, 2020](#)). MHA is also recommending policymakers make mental health screenings the norm for the entire population to find new cases, as soon as they arise ([MHA, 2020](#)). Imagine the impact we could have, if universal screening for mental health and substance use disorders became the norm. To take the MHA screening, visit: <https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools>.

Self-Care Corner

Recognizing the Signs & Protecting Mental Health

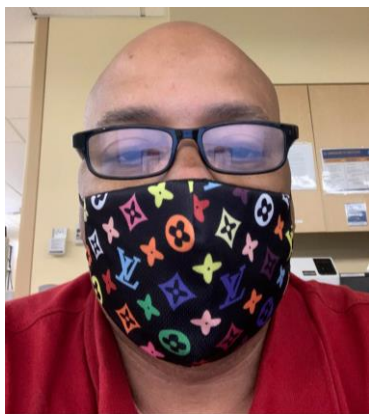
According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) ([2020](#)), the long-term isolation that has been endured across the world, as a result of COVID-19, has broken down the support systems of individuals globally. Additionally, there has been a rise in cases of abuse, especially among individuals experiencing domestic violence, who have had no escape from their abusers while “locking down” ([UN Women, 2020](#)). The WEF posited several suggestions for remedying the effects of long-term isolation, including the following:

- **Learn to identify stress:** Spend time reflecting on your emotions and moods. Use trackers or Social-Emotional Learning Programs such as [Wysa](#) or [TrustCircle](#).
- **Seek out help:** talk to a trusted person about what you are experiencing. Reach out to professionals. **SAMHSA's National Helpline – 1-800-662-HELP (4357)**. You can also try the free services offered through [Sanvello](#) or [YourDost](#), both recommended by WEF.
- **Find and spend time with like-minded people.** Try websites like, [Meetup](#).
- **Share your feelings.** Try starting small, if this seems daunting. Experts agree that sharing feelings reduces anxiety and helps us feel connected to others.
- **Ask others how they are doing.** Never underestimate the power of empathizing with others. This act assists us with regulating our own emotions and increases our compassion for others.

Coach-Connect

Ron Brodie, a Peer Recovery Coach at GBMC's Emergency Department, recently shared the following with us:

As a person with a substance use disorder (SUD) I had no idea how rewarding yet challenging it can be to help those in need. When I walk into the room of a person suffering from SUD, I see the shame and sadness in their eyes. After I introduce myself with my job title, I then tell them who I really am. I am also a person who is in recovery from SUD, who has been in the same position they are in. I have felt the same shame, hurt and hopelessness they experience. I tell them they are not alone and there is a way out and I am here to help them find their way. I immediately see a different side to them, and I know it's because they have someone listening that truly understands. In my position, I get to follow them out into the community to help them continue down the path of recovery. It is very rewarding to be able to witness them working on themselves and continuing to heal!



Recently, I was asked to help out in the labor and delivery department. Coming from the emergency department, this was a frightening ask for me. At first, I was extremely nervous of what it would be like. The change alone is unsettling. I took it on headfirst and dove into the education of drug use while being pregnant. Now that I've been working in the department, I've realized that I can accomplish whatever I put my mind to. Now I help mothers that are in a dark place. They do not want to hurt their child, but they are in the grips of their substance use. I'm here to support them in whatever path they choose and help them understand they can RECOVER and live the life they truly desire.

**"...I've realized that I
can accomplish
whatever I put my
mind to."**



**-Ron Brodie, Peer Recovery Coach,
GBMC**

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