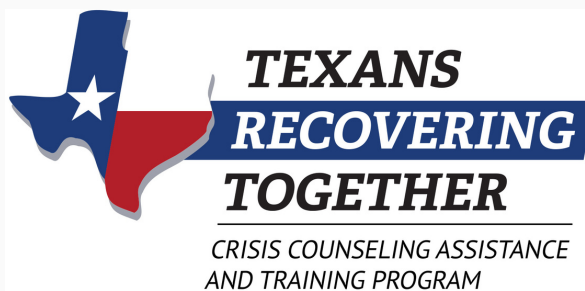


COVID-19 Information Collaboration

Building Strength, Courage, and Resilience, through the Pandemic

Local Support Line: (817)-579-4483 | Email: TRT@pecanvalley.org | Texas COVID-19 24/7 Support Line: (833)-986-1919



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Holiday Greetings from the CCP at Pecan Valley

Written by Jamie P., BSW

Holiday Greetings! After a year that has seemed to last an eternity, December is finally here! While many of us view the holidays as the highlight of our year, complete with bright lights and festive music, for others, the holidays wreak havoc on our mental health. If you are a part of the latter group, please know you are not alone. October through December is considered peak mental health season. This means that during these winter months, many people struggle with their mental health due to a variety of reasons, such as the lack of sunlight and the stress of the holidays. Regardless of your experiences with the holiday season, this year certainly brings unprecedented challenges due to social distancing practices and the looming threat of COVID-19. If you need help managing stress or your mental health during the uncertainty of this holiday season, this is the newsletter for you! Keep reading for tips on managing your mental health during the holidays. As always, Texans Recovering Together Crisis Counseling Program is here to support you with FREE & CONFIDENTIAL emotional support. To connect with a trained crisis counselor, you can scan the QR code at the bottom of the newsletter and complete the form. A trained crisis counselor will reach out to you with non-biased and non-clinical support.

Have a safe and blessed holiday season! ~ Your local TRT/Crisis Counseling team at Pecan Valley Centers for Behavioral and Developmental Healthcare

Managing your Mental Health During the Holidays

The holidays are hard for many of us under normal circumstances, and with the unprecedented conditions of 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, they can seem unbearable. The good news is, tips and resources are available! Keep reading for simple activities to manage stress reactions and tips on how to engage in self-care. We also included some ideas for making memories in a COVID-19 environment, and information on community resources that are here to support you and your family during the holidays. Feel free to reach out to the Texans Recovering Together Crisis Counseling Program at (817)-579-4483 with any questions or for additional support!

Breathing Technique

Breathing techniques are a simple and effective way to manage feelings of anxiety. When you complete a breathing technique, it sends the signal to your brain to calm down and relax. It increases the oxygen flow to the brain, and reduces stress levels. Below is one of the many ways you can do a breathing technique:

Step 1: Close your eyes and relax your body

Step 2: Imagine a place that is peaceful to you

Step 3: Breathe in through your nose and into your stomach for a count of three seconds

Step 4: Hold your breath for a count of three seconds

Step 5: Breathe out through your mouth for a count of three seconds

Step 6: Repeat steps 3 through 5 as many times as needed until you feel calmer

TREE BREATHING



Grounding Techniques



Another tool for managing anxiety and stress is called a grounding technique. Grounding techniques are used to "ground" or connect you with your present environment by utilizing your 5 senses. It helps you to recognize and focus on where you are and develop a sense of comfort by establishing control of your body and situation. Below are the steps to a simple grounding technique:

Step 1: Relax your body and take a deep breath into your stomach

Step 2: Identify 5 things you can see in your environment

Step 3: Identify 4 things you can touch

Step 4: Identify 3 things you can hear

Step 5: Identify 2 things you can smell

Step 6: Identify 1 thing you can taste

Self-Care

Self-care is a vital aspect to maintaining overall well-being all year. However, with the extra stress the holidays bring, it becomes even more important, and even more difficult, to practice self-care. Self-care can be as simple as taking a pause during a busy day to unplug for a few minutes and reflect on your thoughts and emotions, or as elaborate as planning an entire day at the spa, complete with a massage. Self-care looks different for everyone, but below are few tips for prioritizing your self-care during the holidays this year!

- Make your physical health a priority with exercise, plenty of rest, and healthy food. (However, it is okay to enjoy the tasty meals and desserts the holidays bring- part of self-care is finding a balance!)
- Focus on gratitude- create a daily mental list of the people and things you are thankful for, and reflect on the tasks you did each day that helped someone else
- Do an activity every day that is meaningful to you (read a book, journal, listen to a podcast, etc.)
- Engage in a relaxing activity, such as yoga, meditation, or deep breathing
- Talk about your feelings with a trusted friend or family member



Making Memories

The holidays are a time to make memories with loved ones. Although COVID-19 limits our opportunities for in-person activities, there are still plenty of fun and affordable ways to safely make memories with our families and loved ones. Here are a few ideas!

- If you are unable to meet with family members in person due to the threat of COVID-19, host a virtual Christmas dinner using Zoom or another video communication platform
- Have a Christmas movie night with the members of your household, complete with popcorn and Christmas pajamas. If you live alone, do a Zoom movie night, where your loved ones get on Zoom and each play the movie in their respective home so everyone can watch together, but safely
- Make a 2020 ornament to remember the eventfulness of the year
- Read a Christmas book, such as the Polar Express or 'Twas The Night Before Christmas
- Sing Christmas Karaoke and host a virtual Christmas party

Our hearts grow tender
with childhood memories and
L O V E of kindred, and
we are *better* throughout
the year for having, in spirit,
become a *child* again at
CHRISTMAS-TIME.

- Laura Ingalls Wilder

Community Resources

Our communities are doing many events to make sure Christmas is extra special this year! Below are some of the events happening in each of our six counties:

Erath County:

Light Up The Night: Friday through Sunday, December 4 through the 20 at 6 PM at the Birdsong Amphitheater

Holly Jolly: Monday, December 14, 6-9 PM in Downtown Stephenville

Community Christmas Dinner: Wednesday, December 16, 4 to 7 PM at the Graham Street Church of Christ

Food Drive: Thursday, December 17, 5-7 PM at First Baptist Church

Hood County:

Away in the Manger: December 5 through the 13 at the Langdon Center Art Gallery

Ranchos Brazos Food Pantry: Thursday, December 17, 5 to 6:30 PM at the Ranchos Brazos Community Center

Johnson County:

Magic of Christmas: November 23 through December 31 at Hulen Park

Carriage Rides in Old Town Burleson: December 5 and 19, 11 AM to 3 PM

Polar Express Drive-in Movie: Tuesday, December 15 at 6:30 to 8:30 PM at the Russell Art Farm Center

Palo Pinto County:

Food Giveaway: Thursday, December 17 at 10 AM at Assembly of God in Christ Church

Parker County:

Holiday in the Park: Friday, December 11 at 6 PM in Heritage Park

Candlelight Tour of Homes: Saturday, December 12, 5 to 8 PM

Somervell County:

Annual Holiday Sip and Shop: Friday, December 11, 4-6 PM, at Glen Rose Discount Drug

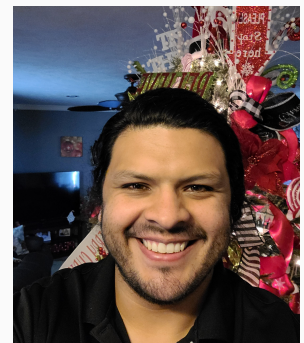
Introducing Our New Staff Members



CallieAnn graduated with her Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW) in December of 2020. She has a special interest in trauma and enjoys working with adolescents.



Tashika is a licensed Bachelor-level Social Worker (LBSW), and holds a Master's of Arts Degree. She has over 18 years of experience in social work. Her special interests are child welfare and the senior population.



Aaron graduated with his Bachelor's degree in Psychology in August of 2020. His area of interest is trauma, and plans to work with veterans and first responders.

The Texans Recovering Together Crisis Counseling Program wishes you and your loved ones a safe and blessed holiday season!

Need support? Scan our QR Code and fill out the online form to be connected with a trained crisis counselor!

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Email: TRT@pecanvalley.org

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Pecan Valley 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (800)-772-5987



PECAN VALLEY CENTERS
FOR BEHAVIORAL & DEVELOPMENTAL HEALTHCARE



**TEXANS
RECOVERING
TOGETHER**
CRISIS COUNSELING ASSISTANCE
AND TRAINING PROGRAM

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Grounding Techniques

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Self-Care

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Check out our newsletters from previous months at the QR codes below!



September Newsletter



October Newsletter



November Newsletter

