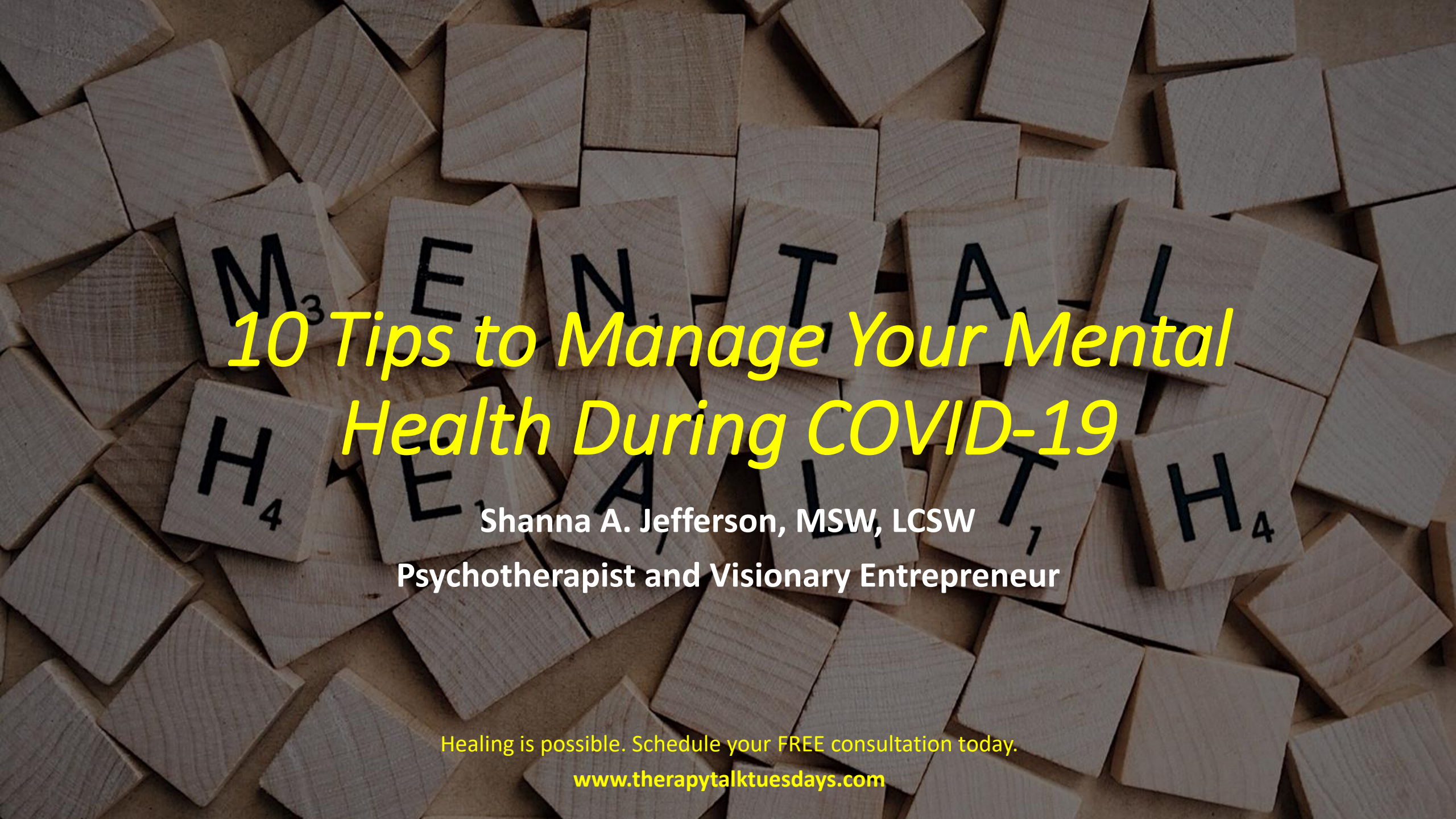

10 Tips to Manage Your Mental Health During COVID-19

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Psychotherapist and Visionary Entrepreneur

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- The novel coronavirus disease has suspended our lives, compelling us to stay in our homes, keep our social distance and be wary of everything we touch. This pandemic situation has the potential to increase stress and anxiety because of the fear of catching the disease and the fear of the unknown.

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- In the face of this uncertainty, it's normal to be anxious and afraid. Managing stress and staying prepared and informed can be difficult, particularly for people with existing mental health challenges. However, it is vital to manage your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to protect your overall well-being.

Below are 10 tips for practicing and maintaining your mental health during these trying times.

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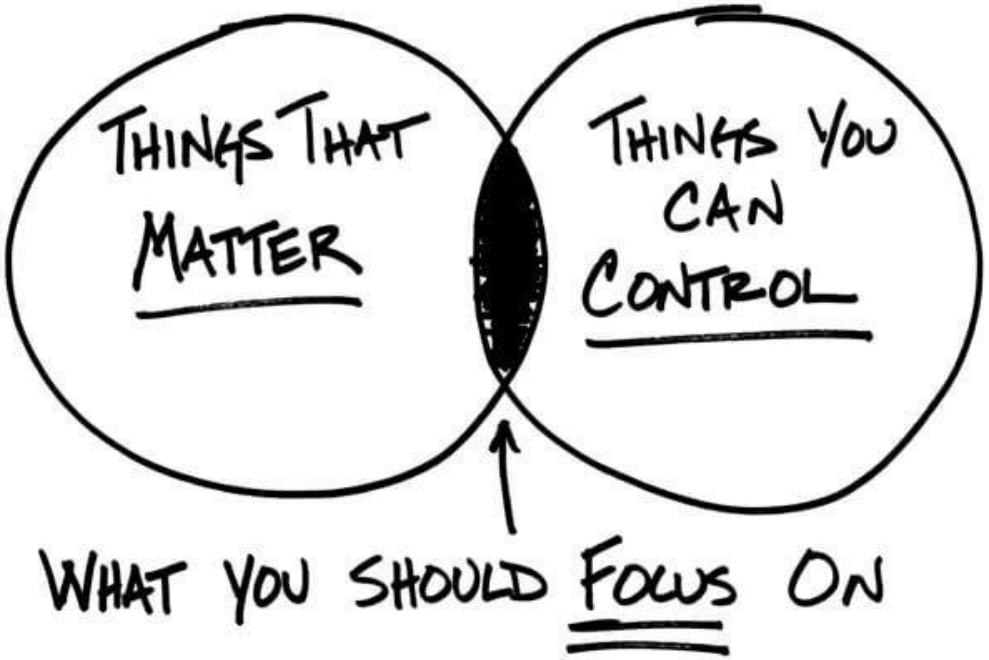
1. Focus On What You Can Control

- The first thing to do is to separate what you can control from what you can't. As a human being, control is essential and this is a time where you don't feel that.
- You can control washing your hands.
- You can control your compliance with safety orders.
- But more importantly, you can control your perspective. So choose to shift your mindset from one of a victim to a conqueror. With a mindset that you shall overcome whatever comes your way, even in such times as this, you will overcome.



2. Do What Helps You Feel Productive

- In some regards, it's almost as if the world has slowed down. Less traffic. Less entertainment. But I encourage you to still find ways to feel productive. Certainly, give yourself permission to "netflix and chill", but also continue to find value to doing things that will contribute to your productivity.
- Perhaps you have been wanting to complete that do-it-yourself home project. Well, now is the time. Get it done. Or there is a book you have delayed reading. Grab that book and read it.
- Along the same lines, utilize this time to build new habits that will transcend beyond our current restrictions.

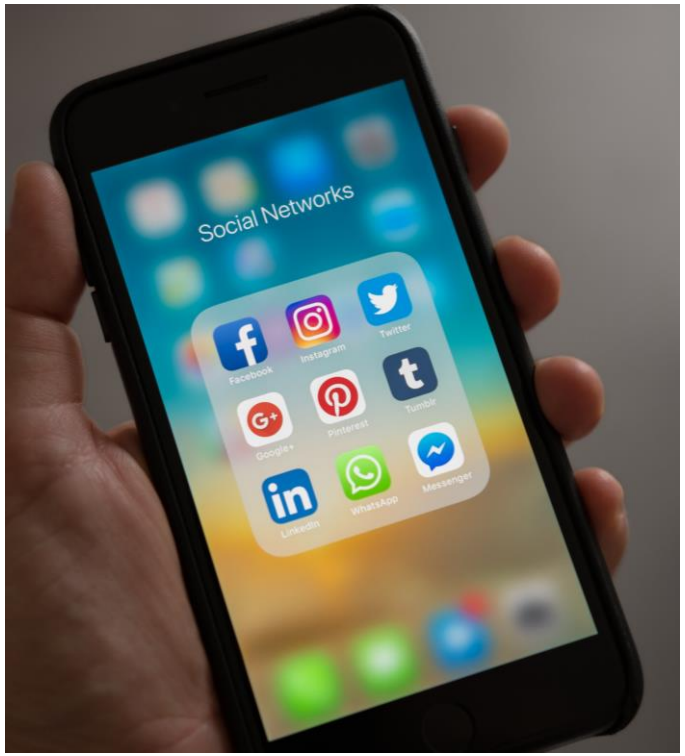
3. Stay in the Present

- Oftentimes we can worry about the future trying to predict what's going to happen next. However, as a mental health therapist, I encourage my clients to value the importance of the present moment. Therefore, if you find yourself stuck in the past or the future tries to bring yourself back to the present by focusing on what you can see, hear, smell, taste and what you can do now. So, I encourage you to identify ways that you can stay present in the only moment that is guaranteed…and that’s the moment you are in now.

4. Stay Connected

- Even without an in-person physical presence, we can still stay connected with others. And perhaps, can connect with more people including those you have not spoken with in some time. You can do this through skype, social media group calls, phone calls and other various platforms. Host a virtual party. Write a letter to a friend or family member. Be creative. But whatever you do, stay connected.

5. Set Limits



- Take breaks intermittently from social media and the news. Give your mind a chance to disconnect. It is okay! Consider setting up specific times or time limits on how long you spend checking the news each day, so you can stay informed without getting overwhelmed.

6. Maintain a Regular Schedule

- Create a daily schedule of things you can do so the time doesn't get away from you. Make sure you pay attention to your sleep. Have daily goals. And you have school-aged children, please ensure they are maintaining a routine as well.
- Maintaining a schedule is beneficial such that it keeps you focused and distract you from the news and people which might keep you anxious and tampering your mental strength.

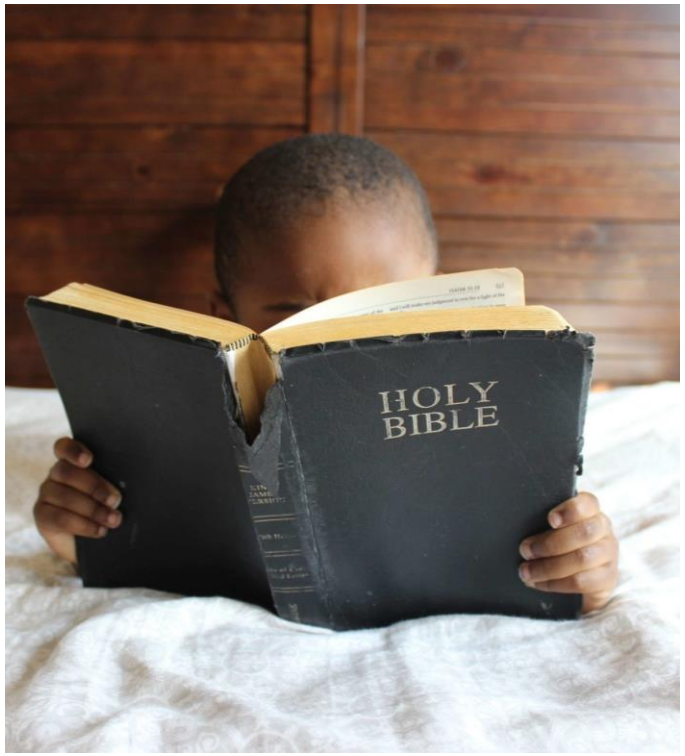
7. Social Distancing

- The coronavirus (COVID-19) is spread by person-to-person contact. Certainly, if there are only two people together and one is positive, then you are risk. However, the risk only increases when more people gather. Thus, it is imperative to adhere to the social distancing guidelines.

8. Create New Healthy Habits

- Engage in healthy habits as much as possible. Eat well-balanced meals, get some exercise, get plenty of sleep, and avoid bad habits such as too much alcohol. Step back and give yourself space to process your feelings. Consider doing some stretches or yoga, or engaging in a short mindfulness exercise to help keep you grounded.

9. Pray. Relax. Meditate.



- One way to relax your mind is to avoid worrying thoughts. You can meditate and pray for yourself and your family. Relaxation exercises and prayer can improve your state of mind and outlook on life. Meditating will help you feel calm and enhance the effects of therapy. Avoid taking drugs and too much alcohol even though you might think it will help you, and in most cases, they only aggravate problems.

10. Acknowledge Your Feelings

- Times of increased uncertainly such as this can certainly trigger feelings of stress and anxiety. Please know that this is completely normal. Acknowledge how you are feeling. There are many ways you can do this. Talk to a friend. Write in your journal. Connect with a mental health professional. And remember, together we will get through this.

Virtual Therapy Services Now Available

- Therapy Talk Tuesdays is a platform created by Visionary and Psychotherapist Shanna A. Jefferson that focuses on awareness, education and affordable mental health services.
- Our intent is to eliminate the stigma associated with mental illness, normalize the conversation, and provide accessible services via our online platform

Due to the current public health threat, we have expanded our online platform.

Effective March 17 and until further notice, we have extended our Therapy Talk Tuesdays special rate beyond Tuesday.
We are here for you.

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About the Author

- Shanna A. Jefferson is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with more than 10 years of professional experience working in various settings including community-based mental health services and homeless facilities. Shanna is passionate about helping men, women, and youth who are experiencing anger, grief, guilt, shame, depression, anxiety, and other life stressors.
- As an eclectic therapist, Shanna utilizes a broad spectrum of interventions including hip-hop therapy, motivational interviewing, spiritual counseling, and cognitive-behavioral therapy, specifically tailored to address the unique needs of those she serves.
- Virtual services are available to residents of NC, SC, GA, and NJ.
- Shanna is a firm believer that everyone can transcend adversity and achieve greatness. Contact Shanna today to begin the healing process so that you can experience elevation, transformation, and Greatness in your life.

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