

***President's Bulletin – March 2020***  
***Robyn Mehlenbeck, PhD***

Dear Members, Trainees & Friends,

It is hard to know where to begin. By now, you have received so many emails and updates from your institutions, cities, entertainment venues, etc. about restrictions related to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Meetings, conferences, sporting events, classes have been cancelled or shifted online. Friends and family members are getting ready for hibernation. In addition, for some of us, we have friends or loved ones directly affected by the virus.

What can SDBP do to help in this time of increased worry? My last bulletin stressed taking care of yourself. This is as important today as it was before the holidays. You know the CDC recommendations, but as developmental behavioral specialists, we also focus on the emotional toll that this pandemic and/or quarantine can bring, not only for ourselves, but also for the children and families we treat. Here are a few recommendations for taking care of yourself and your families in this difficult time:

1. ***Separate what is in your control from what is not.*** There are things you can do, and it's helpful to focus on those. Wash your hands. Remind others to wash theirs. Take your vitamins. Don't stop exercising and focus on getting enough sleep. Limit your consumption of news & social media! (Do you really need to know what is happening on a cruise ship you aren't on?)
2. ***Do what helps you feel a sense of safety.*** This will be different for everyone, and it's important not to compare yourself to others. It's ok if you've decided what makes you feel safe is to limit attendance of large social events, but make sure you separate when you are isolating based on potential for sickness versus isolating because it's part of depression, or other severe anxiety.
3. ***Get outside in nature—even if you are avoiding crowds.*** I took a walk this week in my neighborhood with my son. The sun was shining, we got our dose of vitamin D, and it felt good to both get some fresh air and quality time together. Exercise also helps both your physical and mental health.
4. ***Challenge yourself to stay in the present.*** Perhaps your worry is compounding—you are not only thinking about what is currently happening, but also projecting into the future. When you find yourself worrying about something that hasn't happened, gently bring yourself back to the present moment. Notice the sights, sounds, tastes and other sensory experiences in your immediate moment and name them. Engaging in mindfulness activities is one way to help stay grounded when things feel beyond your control.
5. ***Stay connected and reach out if you need more support.*** Talk to trusted friends or family about what you are feeling. If you are feeling particularly anxious or if you are struggling with your mental health, it's ok to reach out to a mental health professional for support. You don't have to be alone with your worry and it can be comforting to share what you are experiencing with those trained to help.

Second, with all the resources out there, these are a couple of my favorite so far, including an excellent guide that can be shared with your patient's families.

<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/pandemics> - Five Ways to View Coverage of the Coronavirus

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019> - Excellent guide for parents

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html> - Another good guide with links to the latest information

If there are other ways we can support you, our SDBP family, please reach out. For many of us it is a few minutes on Zoom to commiserate and compare measures our institutions have taken. For others, it is a quiet glass of wine with a significant other not talking at all. For those with kids, it might be unearthing the board games that were dusty in the basement. For our lowest income clients, it is ensuring that they have access to food and resources despite the pandemic.

#### **A few SDBP reminders –**

As the Complex ADHD Guidelines were released in January/February, we celebrate the incredibly hard work of the Complex ADHD Guidelines work force, the ADHD SIG, as well as the ongoing work of the implementation and dissemination teams! Check out the link on our website to see the organizations who have also endorsed our guidelines – more to come!

[SDBP Complex ADHD Guideline Webpage](#)

Have some down time due to travel restrictions, etc.? **Complete the ADHD Survey!!!** As the guidelines are making their way into more & more excellent hands, we need the input YOU provide on the ADHD survey to help measure the eventual impact! Fill it out today!

[ADHD Guideline Survey link](#)

Last, **make sure to check out our discussion board** – lots of our Committees, SIGs and Sections have been posting about their work, their meetings and what they are accomplishing. We hope that this will inspire you to JOIN a meeting – every meeting posted is a committee/SIG/Section who would LOVE to have more members. Where is your passion? Contribute that to SDBP! Join us!!!

If you have any questions, concerns or need any help in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out!

*Warmly,  
Robyn Mehlenbeck  
President, SDBP*