The current COVID-19 public health crisis and its many stressors can increase feelings of isolation, despair, anxiety and suicidal ideation – even among those who haven’t experienced these feelings in the past. These are common reactions in times of uncertainty or when there’s a perception of danger. Social connection has proven critical to providing support for these feelings, and for helping reduce suicidal ideation and saving lives. However, in an era of social distancing, it may seem challenging to provide this type of support to friends and family.

See below for information on how to provide support during this challenging time

Connecting During Social Distancing
- Utilize technology to bridge the physical distance between family, friends, neighbors and colleagues.
- Check-in with people often – even a quick text or phone call can make the difference.
- Get online. Social media is a wonderful way to stay updated and connected, as well as foster social connections with those around you.

Take Care of Yourself
- Practice self-care and mindfulness – and encourage family and friends to do the same.
- You don’t have to be “perfect” to cope successfully. Everyone is making it up as they go along and doing their best.
- Set aside time everyday to step away from the news and enjoy other activities.

Recognize and respond when someone is reaching out for help
On the back of this flier, there is information on how to respond to invitations from someone who is displaying suicidal ideation. These tactics can be used in person or via phone or video call.

Seek professional help
- Call or text 1 (844) 493-TALK (8255) or text TALK to 38255 for 24/7 mental health crisis support
- Mental Health Partners is still accepting new clients. Call (303) 443-8500 to receive an assessment today.
Be A Part of the Community
Working to Prevent Suicide
How to recognize when someone may be reaching out for help

Verbal Invitations
Someone may be inviting support if they are talking openly about:
- Ending their life
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Struggling to find a reason to live
- Feeling that they are a burden to those around them
- Feelings of being trapped

Behavioral Invitations
Some behavioral signs that may be inviting you to help:
- Increased substance use
- Researching suicide methods and/or tools
- Withdrawal from regular activities & relationships
- Giving away personal possessions
- Too little or too much sleep
- Intentionally saying goodbye

Emotional Invitations
Emotional invitations may be displayed as one or more of the following moods:
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest & motivation
- Humiliation & Shame
- Relief and/or a sudden improvement in mood
- Irritability

Ask
- Take note and reflect back invitations out loud. Example: “I am hearing that you are working through some really big things right now”
- Connect these invitations to suicide. Example: “Sometimes when someone is grappling with such big issues they are thinking about suicide”
- Ask the question “Are you thinking about suicide?”

If someone is in imminent risk do not leave them alone. Call 911. If there is not an immediate safety concern call the Statewide Crisis Line directly at 1-844-493-8255 or text TALK to 38255

Approach
- Choose a time when you are alone. If the conversation is online or over the phone, make sure you both have privacy
- Begin the conversation in a calm manner
- Help them open up by asking a question: “How are you?”
- Share your specific observations such as: “I’ve noticed you are staying home a lot” “You seem really tired”

Listen
- Focus on compassionate listening
- Make eye contact if you’re together or on a video chat. If you’re on the phone you can say things like “I am listening” or repeat back something the person has just said.
- Ask them how long they have been feeling this way
- Continue asking questions to keep the conversation going

Connect & Reassure
- Acknowledge and affirm their emotions
- Brainstorm helpful options and resources together
- Encourage and assist your friend in connecting to appropriate professional resources

Check Back In
- Treat a mental health crisis the same way you would treat a physical health crisis. Do not hesitate to check back in with your friend regularly as a trusted resource
- When in doubt, continue checking in. There is a high probability this person is still in need of your support

Mental Health PARTNERS
Healthy minds, healthy lives, healthy communities