



934TH AIRLIFT WING

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Prevention Connection: Building a Healthy Community

January is Stalking Awareness Month, Mental Wellness Month, Slavery and Human Trafficking Month, and National Mentoring Month

The new year is upon us... new year, new beginnings. Maybe those new beginnings includes seeing the light at the end of a dark tunnel. Think about what you were doing at this time last year before COVID-19. Were there things available that you took for granted, not knowing the virus would take them away? Things or places like going to your favorite restaurant, or being able to see a sporting event in person. Maybe the virus took away your job. Or worse yet, maybe the virus took a loved one from you. Let's reflect a little and think back to 1 Jan 2020... did you think we would be where we are today?

Very few of us predicted the virus would overtake our country like it has. Just like us not knowing what was coming back on 1 Jan 2020, we don't know what is coming our way beyond today. That in and of itself can cause anxiety for some. However, we can change that mindset. Let's flip that switch and look at it this way: the vaccine is in full force. People are getting vaccinated every day. It's been said that if roughly 70% of the population receives the vaccination, we will beat COVID-19.

January is Mental Wellness month. The World Health Organization (WHO) describes mental wellness as "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community". Let's not get bogged down in the negativity that the virus has brought upon us. Rather, let's flip the switch and look at the positivity of what the vaccination will bring us. The light is coming. We will beat this virus.

Let us be grateful for the people in our lives, for things we have. If you do, your mental well-being will improve and you will continue thrive.

Special points of interest:

For more info on mental wellness go to: <https://www.healthyplace.com/self-help/self-help-information/what-is-mental-health-wellness>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/mental-health-covid-19/art-20482731>

COVID Keeps by Ch. Cooper

I wish my memory was better, but it is what it is. The reason I say that is because I cannot take credit for the phrase I am using today, but neither can I give credit because I can't remember who I heard it from. It was a 934th Airman who shared it with me last month and I thought it was a great idea, so thank you. The phrase is "COVID Keeps". What the phrase recognizes is that the COVID crisis produced some positive things that we want to keep. This in no way is meant to minimize the pain and suffering COVID has caused; it is significant. However, it speaks to the greater truth that in any "bad" situation, there are good things we can glean from it.

So let's get started. I think one "keep" is the slower pace of life COVID re-introduced. COVID caused a re-calibration of our normally hectic pace as we were unable to pursue the endless diversions normally available to us. Solitude and quietness were given a place in our lives that had long been denied. Individually, we had the opportunity to reflect on our own values and priorities. By slowing us down, we were given the opportunity to re-focus attention on those things that mattered most, like family and friends. Eating together and playing games as family strengthened relationships and opened communication that was too often absent. Personally, we connected much more with distant family members than we did previously. Let's keep what we gained from slowing down.

COVID also rekindled interest in learning some long-lost skills in self-sufficiency. Canning vegetables became so popular we could not find any canning supplies. Some young men in the area got together and butchered hogs, even making their own sausage. That hasn't been done since my grandfather's time. Other skills like cooking from scratch and sewing also saw an increase in interest. The "keep" isn't so much the skill, as important as it is, but rather it is the attitude of self-sufficiency that was developed and the "can-do" attitude that was fostered that are so important. Let's keep building on that foundation of self-reliance.

Another "keep" is an appreciation for things we had taken for granted-like travel, gathering with friends and family, eating out, attending class in person, working together in person, toilet paper. Living in a land of such opportunity and abundance we are prone to take so many things for granted and we forget to be grateful. COVID reminded us to be thankful for what we have, no matter how seemingly insignificant that thing might be. The benefits of gratitude cannot be overstated. Gratitude is a key contributor to positive mental health. An appreciation for what we once took for granted is a COVID keep.

This is just a sampling of some positive things that can come from this COVID experience. I encourage you to find more keeps and make them part of your everyday life.

Stalking Awareness: Be Informed

According to the Stalking Prevention, Awareness, & Resource Center (2020), stalking is defined as “a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear”. Two or more incidents is considered to be a pattern. According to the CDC, 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men have experienced stalking in their lifetimes. Stalkers use a variety of tactics, such as using unwanted contacts (including using technology, social media, third party contact), giving unwanted gifts, showing up or approaching an individual or their family and friends, monitoring, surveillance, property damage, and threats. Remember, stalking is a crime in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, the military, and tribal lands.

According to the CDC, it's important to understand no two stalking situations are alike. There are no guarantees what works for one person will work for another. Another thing to understand is to trust your instincts and don't downplay the danger. If you feel you are unsafe, you probably are. If you are being stalked, be sure to keep an incident log. It's also important to develop a safety plan. There are resources available to assist. If you know someone who is being stalked, be sure to listen and show support. Don't blame the victim. You will also want to take steps to ensure your own safety. If you have questions, contact your VPI at 612-713-1159.

Sources: www.stalkingawareness.org

<https://www.cdc.gov/features/prevent-stalking/index.html>



If you or someone you know is experiencing stalking, help is available. Contact your local domestic violence resource center or crisis center, or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-3224. If you are being stalked, do not use your personal cell phone, but rather use a phone that cannot be traced, such as a friend's phone or a land line.

Human Trafficking: A Multi-Billion Dollar Industry

According to the Department of Homeland Security, human trafficking is “the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act”. Human trafficking can happen in any community, and target anyone of any age, race, gender, or nationality. Also, people are more vulnerable to human trafficking during pandemics.

Myths about human trafficking:

- **It does not happen in the U.S.—Human trafficking exists in every country, in cities, suburbs, and rural towns.**
- **Human trafficking only affects foreign born individuals and those who are poor—Victims can be anyone from any nationality or socioeconomic group.**
- **Human trafficking is only sex trafficking—Sex trafficking exists, but it is not the only type of human trafficking. Forced labor is another type of human trafficking; both involve exploitation of people. Victims are found in legitimate and illegitimate labor industries, including sweatshops, massage parlors, agriculture, restaurants, hotels, and domestic service.**
- **Individuals must be forced or coerced into commercial sex acts to be victims of human trafficking—Any minor who is induced to perform commercial sex acts is a victim of human trafficking, regardless of whether he/she is forced coerced.**
- **Human trafficking and human smuggling are the same—“Trafficking” is based on exploitation and does not require movement across borders. “Smuggling” is based on movement and involves moving a person across a country’s border with that person’s consent in violation of immigration laws.**
- **Human trafficking victims will attempt to seek help when in public—Human trafficking is often a hidden crime. Victims may be afraid to come forward and get help; they may be forced or coerced through threats or violence; they may fear retribution from traffickers, including danger to their families; and they may not be in possession of or have control of their identification documents.**

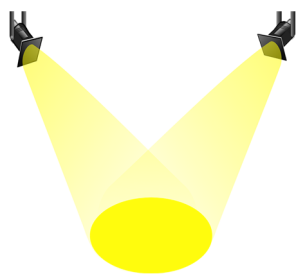
Source: <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/what-human-trafficking>

To report suspected human trafficking to Federal law enforcement:

1-866-347-2423

To get help from the National Human Trafficking Hotline:

1-888-373-7888



Resource Spotlight

Vet Center—The Vet Center (1-877-War Vets) provides a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to combat veterans and their families. Vet Centers guide veterans and their families through many of the major adjustments in lifestyle that often occur after a veteran returns from a deployment. Services for a veteran may include individual and group counseling in areas such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), alcohol and drug assessment, and suicide prevention referrals. All services are free and strictly confidential. If you are a veteran, you qualify for services.

Prevention Partners/Response:

Violence Prevention: 713-1159

Sexual Assault Response Coordinator:
713-1315

Director of Psychological Health:
713-1224

Airman & Family Readiness: 713-1516

Personal Financial Counselor:
612-297-2826

Chaplain Corp: 713-1226

Equal Opportunity: 713-1221

Exercise Physiologist: 713-1472

Security Forces (BDOC): 713-1101/1102

Military One Source: 1-800-342-9647

DoD Safe Helpline: 1-877-995-5247

Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-8255

National Domestic Violence Hotline:
1-800-799-7233

National Human Trafficking Resource
Center: 1-888-373-7888

APP* Spotlight and Self Care Strategy—Add this to your Tool Box!



We all know that at the turn of the New Year, many people want to live a healthier life. One way to do that is to eat healthier. The Fooducate© app is one such app to help you with eating healthier. You can use this app to track the foods you eat, get advice from nutritional professionals, and even scan a bar code of a food item to see if it is healthy for you. When you scan a bar code, it will send you a letter grade (A, B, C, or D) if that food item is healthy or not. Use it while shopping to help you select better foods. Fooducate© analyzes information found in product nutrition panels and ingredient lists. There are in-app purchases to help with Gluten and allergies, GMO warnings, and KETO and low-carb diet options.

*The DOD and Air Force does not endorse any organization or product listed.