

# ALLONE HEALTH FAMILY OF EAPS

## FROM VICTIM TO THRIVER

It has been over 100 years (1918) that the world has faced such a widespread virus and it has impacted us in a variety of ways. It has created fear:

- **We are frightened for our own health.**
- **We are frightened for the health of our loved ones, especially our older ones.**
- **Our normal way of coping (getting together with loved ones) does not work as well when we are physically distancing.**
- **We are frightened for our future.**

It is in this time, we can be having a wide variety of reactions:

- **Physical (exhaustion)**
- **Emotional (overwhelmed; fear; anger; guilt)**
- **Behavioral (irritability)**
- **Cognitive (trouble concentrating; staying focused)**
- **Spiritual (how can this be happening to us?)**

Some of our Emotional Reactions include:

**Guilt:** Not being able to do enough to provide for yourself, your family, visiting elderly relatives, or that you are having to work when your family might be needing you, guilt over the possibility of infecting others.

**Anger:** Not having enough resources, worried about financial impact, or how can the being of your spiritual beliefs allow this to happen.

**Grief:** It is not supposed to happen in our community, to our friends, to our families.

You are not the only one feeling this way. Now, we feel like a victim of the pandemic, and while that is true, we must not get stuck here. We need to take steps to move from Victim to Survivor, and maybe Thriver

### VICTIM

- Sense of being stuck & helpless
- Feeling out of control
- Angry
- Passive
- Overwhelmed by emotions
- Self-pity
- Looking for Rescue
- Avoidance
- Self-Blame
- Preoccupation with the Past

### SURVIVOR

- Sense of having “gotten through it”
- Beginning to take control back
- Optimistic
- Emotions come in “waves” but able to manage
- Belief that one has resources
- Living “one day at a time”
- Influenced but not controlled by the past
- Focus is on the present

### THRIVER

- Committed to moving forward
- Self-determined
- Active & engaged in own recovery
- Acknowledges emotions honestly and directly
- Acquiring peace and renewal
- Belief that one has learned, even grown, from the experience
- Heightened compassion for others
- Looking to the future

Stressors can be real or imagined; we need to understand the difference. Write down two lists:

- **What is happening right now?**
- **What might happen?**

Write down what steps you can take to address each of them. When you have completed these steps, you have done all you can do for now. We don't know yet the answers to our questions nor the ultimate impact on our lives and this is a very uncomfortable place to be in. Constantly worrying about them makes us go around and around in circular thinking, which often freezes us from doing anything. Ask yourself, when has only worrying got us to solve the issue?

Now, remember a difficult time in your life that you were able to eventually resolve. When thinking about this difficult time, ask yourself:

- **What did I do about this?**
- **How did I get through it?**
- **What steps/actions did I take?**
- **What kind of messages did I give myself that were helpful moving forward?**
- **Who did I turn to for help?**
- **What did I learn from that experience?**
- **Which of those things might be helpful now?**

In doing this, it gives us a blueprint to move to the Survivor Role and allows us to focus on two areas, the physical and the mental. To help us in our physical stress management efforts we could work on the following areas:

- **Physical fitness / exercise**
- **Nutrition**
- **Relaxation training**
- **Sleep / rest / "time out"**

In our mental health improvement, we need to focus on how we are thinking about the issues. Positive self-talk needs to be reasonable.

- **Re-labeling** - the art of calling a spade, a diamond in the rough
- **Surrender** - the art of letting go
- **Faith** - the art of accepting the mysterious and unknowable
- **Whispering** - the art of giving yourself positive realistic messages
- **Humor** - the art of laughing and not taking yourself too seriously
- What can I do to improve the situation?

Once we can transition to the Survivor Role, we can begin to work towards becoming a Thriver.

### **THRIVER ROLE:**

What things can I do with my family that might be fun? How can I enrich/help my neighbors/family and still maintain physical distancing? How can I contribute to the effort? Can I sew masks? Can I organize a neighborhood get together with everyone staying on their own porch? Can I use social media to keep current with my friends and family and make them laugh?