



NewBridge

newbridge.org

Summer 2020



Dear Friend,

We hope you are staying well during this challenging time in our world. As you know, NewBridge Services had to change the way we deliver services during the COVID-19 crisis to protect clients and staff. We never stopped serving our communities, but circumstances and the governor's orders resulted in limitations, especially in the area of outreach. While we continued to build a **repository** of articles, videos and audio recordings on how to stay both physically and mentally healthy, we have not been able to conduct in-person programs. Until we can, we've created this newsletter that includes information and advice for staying active and engaged. We would love to hear from you! Please send your thoughts on life during the pandemic to services@newbridge.org.

Take care,

Beth Jacobson

Beth Jacobson
Director of Community Response
and Education
NewBridge Services

Relaxation Techniques to Calm Anxiety Over COVID-19

COVID-19 isn't only making people sick, it's infecting our psyche with anxiety and fear. Try the following meditative techniques to calm your mind. Research shows that meditation can relieve stress, ease pain and improve concentration.



Focusing on Your Breath

This is a great introduction to meditation. You can do it anywhere, and even a minute or two of it can be effective.

1. Sit comfortably and relax your shoulders.
2. Breathe in through your nose slowly and deeply. Feel your abdomen expand.
3. Exhale slowly.
4. Feel relaxation filling your body.
5. Work up to doing it for longer periods.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness involves keeping your attention in the present moment, without judging it as happy or sad, good or bad. The goal is to simply observe. Mindfulness allows you to calmly and consciously accept whatever is happening, moment to moment.

How to Practice Mindfulness

1. Sit comfortably on the floor or a chair with your back, neck, and head straight, but not stiff.
2. Set a timer, 5 minutes for beginners. You can increase the time as you become more accustomed to the practice.
3. Put your attention on your breathing, noticing the feeling of air passing in and out of your nostrils.
4. When your attention wavers (it will), observe where your mind went. You may experience impatience, think about tasks you need to accomplish, feel an itch or other sensation, or recall a memory.
5. After acknowledging the experience, return your attention to your breath.
6. Use your breath as an anchor. Each time a thought or feeling arises, momentarily acknowledge it. Don't analyze or judge it. Just observe it and return to your breathing.

Meditative Walking

In meditative walking, you walk slowly and steadily, paying close attention to what you see, hear, smell and feel. Spend a few minutes isolating your attention to each sense in turn. Afterward, use all your senses together. You can also listen to guided walking meditations apps.

Alternatives to Prescription Opioids

The nation's prescription opioid crisis has been exacerbated by the stress and anxiety generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Older adults take more prescriptions and over-the-counter medications than any other age group and are most vulnerable for medication misuse.

NewBridge Services' **Tame the Pain*** is helping older adults understand the risks of prescription opioids and learn alternative pain management options. Awareness efforts like Tame the Pain are working: deaths involving prescription opioids dropped 12% from 2017 to 2018, according to figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Growing evidence shows that **exercise, acupuncture, yoga, meditation, physical therapy, biofeedback, cognitive behavioral therapy, and chiropractic care** can help manage pain, often in combination with medications like acetaminophen and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

Prescription Opioids

Opioids are used to relieve serious pain from surgery,

injuries, and cancer. Opioids such as morphine, codeine and methadone bind to receptors in the brain, spinal cord and gastrointestinal tract, minimizing the body's perception of pain. Consumers may know them by their brand names, including OxyContin, Percodan, Percocet, Vicodin and Dilaudid.

Impact on Adults Age 65+

- Opioid-related hospitalizations increased by 34% and emergency department visits increased by 74% between 2010 and 2015
- Studies show an increased rate of falls and fractures associated with opioid use
- Nearly 1 in 5 are affected by the combined misuse of alcohol and medication
- Risk of adverse effects from opioids and other medication is increased due to age-related changes in metabolism and medication sensitivity



Alternatives to Opioids

Safe, effective alternatives for managing chronic pain include:

- Physical Therapy
- Acupuncture
- Hypnosis
- Massage Therapy
- Electrical nerve stimulation
- Topical Medications
- Steroid Injections
- Yoga
- Chiropractic Care
- Heat/Cold
- Aromatherapy
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- NSAIDs (Advil, Motrin)
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy
- Guided imagery/ Mindfulness
- Herbs (you must ensure they won't interfere with medication)

** Tame the Pain is free to Morris County residents age 60+. When NewBridge can resume the program, individual and group sessions will again be offered. The program is funded by a grant from the New Jersey Department of Human Services.*

A Senior's Reflection on the Pandemic

By Norman E. Sindlinger



Norman Sindlinger is a retired Director of Engineering for Mattel, who as an engineer helped create classic toys like Baby That-a-Way. He is also a poet, and his collection, "Poems of a Random Nature," is an e-book available for free for Amazon Kindle and other readers. Sindlinger will be publishing two additional poetry collections this summer.

The widower and grandfather of four turns 90 on July 9th.

I'll be 90 in several weeks, with plenty of free time to structure my days as I choose. In the early weeks of the pandemic, I devoted much of my free time to following developing news from the online New York Times and CNN.

I'm obviously in a COVID-19 high risk category because of my age. Thanks to the NewBridge staff,

I've been well protected. Melissa White directed that I avoid shopping, and my case manager, Martha Palmer, makes two-week purchases of my groceries and other items. I've had little reason to fear I'd become infected.

Again, thanks to NewBridge, I have a terrific apartment that is so bright and cheerful that it hasn't been a burden to remain isolated in self-quarantine. I have many personal interests I enjoy to fulfill my days.

During the early weeks of the pandemic, I began having some difficulty sleeping. I suspected that I was overloaded with my news consumption, and when I significantly reduced it I began sleeping normally again.

I am fortunate to live independently and am not one of the elderly nursing home residents who have died by the tens of thousands throughout the country. I am also exceptionally fortunate to be a member of the NewBridge community with its outstanding staff support.

Have Fun Exercising Your Brain

As we age, it's important to keep our minds active. This can involve learning a new skill or hobby, and playing strategy games. Eating healthy foods, getting good sleep and exercising regularly are also key factors to a well-maintained brain. But you'll also want to have fun engaging your noggin! Here are some options:

Chess

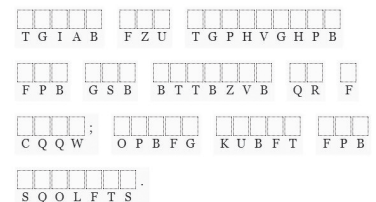
Chess is a game of strategy for two players. It's a board game but online versions are available. The object is for each player to try and checkmate the opponent's king (i.e., the king is under attack and can't make any move to avoid capture).

Websites offer **tutorials for beginners**.



Cryptogram

A cryptogram is a cipher. A message is written in code, with letters representing other letters of the alphabet. The goal is to decipher the message.



Boggle

Boggle is a word game in which you shake up 16 dice that have letters on all sides. Players then have to identify as many words as possible in three minutes using the up-facing letters. You can only create words using sequentially adjacent dice; the letter that follows must touch the one before, either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. There are apps and online versions of Boggle.



Bridge

Bridge is a card game usually played by two two-person teams, but individuals can play **online**. Players score points by taking tricks and fulfilling Bridge contracts that they bid on at the start of their hand. The game ends when one team wins two out of three matches, but the team with the most points is the victor.



5	3			7				
6			1	9	5			
	9	8					6	
8				6				3
4			8		3			1
7				2				6
	6					2	8	
			4	1	9			5
				8			7	9

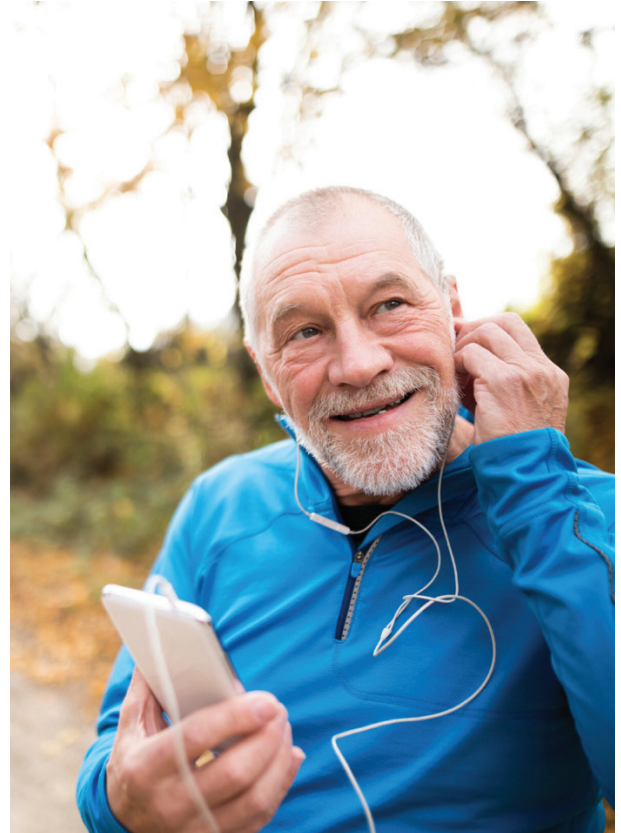
Sudoku

Sudoku is a grid puzzle, with some of the 81 cells already filled in with numbers, 1 through 9. The player must fill in the grid using all numbers 1 through 9 in each row, column and 9-cell block without duplication.

Tips for Staying Healthy During the Pandemic

While stay-at-home orders have ended and more and more people are resuming normal activities, the COVID-19 pandemic has NOT ended. Continue to take precautions to stay healthy:

- **Create a daily routine**, and stick to it. That includes rising and going to bed at the same time each day.
- **Exercise**, doing a mix of aerobic activities, strength training, and stretching.
- **Eat healthy** meals that include lean proteins and plenty of vegetables.
- **Take breaks** from watching, reading or listening to news stories, including social media.
- **Keep in touch with family and friends** by phone and video chats. If you're going to visit in-person, wear a mask and keep six feet away. If possible, gather outdoors.
- **Contact your doctor** if you are feeling unwell. Many medical offices are resuming in-person visits with added precautions.
- **Call the Institute on Aging's Friendship Line** at 1-800-971-0016 if you feel lonely or overwhelmed. It is both a crisis intervention hotline and a warmline for nonemergency emotional support calls.



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