



Effective solutions
for life's challenges

Comprehensive
Management Resources

We can help.

- Confidential counseling
- Onsite crisis response
- Staff training programs
- Consultation services



Better Things Ahead...

C.S. Lewis said, “There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind.” The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives in many ways; we have been challenged to adjust our sails time and time again. We have faced hard losses – disruption of routines, expectations not met, and special events cancelled. We’ve been unable to hug those we hold dear, and many have experienced the greatest hurt of all, the loss of loved ones.

But we have also shown great resilience; beacons of hope and light shining, unwavering in the face of uncertainty, working as one to lift each other up, to listen, laugh, and cry. We know that this season of our lives is temporary: challenging, heartbreaking, confusing, but temporary. As the COVID-19 vaccine reaches more and more people, we hope; we hope for a transition not back to before, but to a brighter tomorrow filled with lessons learned and opportunity. This transition will be gradual, but it will be movement forward, and we are certainly ready for “far, far better things ahead...”

Even as we look forward to settling into a “new normal,” further transitions may create additional stress and worry. Consider the following suggestions to enhance your peace of mind:

Take Time to Reflect

- What did you learn about yourself over the past year? How have you grown as a person? A friend? A parent? In your job? Chances are, you’ve done well pivoting in your daily roles – give yourself recognition for adapting, adjusting, and not giving up!
- How did you get through the particularly challenging days? Make note of those coping skills and reflect on them when faced with future struggles.
- Did you explore a new interest? Maybe you tried yoga, hit the great outdoors, read more books, or added family game night to the calendar? These new pursuits are good for the mind and body, so don’t stop now! Continue to expand your interests and involvement.

Focus on What You Can Control

- Some of us are still navigating interactions with family and friends who may disregard COVID safety guidelines. Although COVID restrictions will gradually reduce, science tells us that wearing a mask and social distancing will continue to be the best practice for some time. Focus on what makes you feel safe and politely explain your opinion, as needed. Take control of what you can, and let the rest go.
- It will also be important to remember that you may navigate change and transition faster, slower, or differently than those around you. Do not judge, instead aim at being kind and patient with yourself and others.

Ask for Help When Coping with Change and Transition

- Turn to your support network. Researchers in the stress and coping field know that talking it out with a trusted friend, family member, or clergy is one of the most significant keys to successfully managing change.

- If you are feeling isolated, ask to meet friends at local walking trails or enjoy outdoor picnics for family gatherings as the weather turns warmer. Sometimes we have to come out of our shell a bit to offer these suggestions, but the positive outcome is always worth it!
- The journey of the pandemic covered a difficult terrain of stress, anxiety, hardship, and loss like never before. Allow yourself to grieve, process, share, and strive towards healing. This may include reaching out for professional assistance.

Practice Self Care

- If you haven't begun practicing self-care yet, there's no time like the present! Small steps focusing on good nutrition, sleep, movement, or relaxation can make a big difference.
- Establish SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound) goals for yourself like two-minutes of breathing exercises at day; walking three laps around your house after lunch; or five minutes of fun dancing with your kids or grandkids. Accomplishing these goals will give you an increased sense of confidence and control. Add on or try new ideas as you build on your accomplishments.
- Throughout your day, practice gratitude – appreciate warm sunshine through your window, shared meals with others, a great conversation with a friend. Remember that simple pleasures should be recognized and celebrated.

Plan for Change

- Understand that change is an inevitable part of our lives. What might be different for you going forward? How does that feel? What could you do to make that transition easier, more comfortable?
- Identify situations that might cause discomfort and access your coping skills to manage through. For example, before or after a difficult conversation take slow, deep breaths or repeat your favorite inspirational quote or mantra.
- Communicate your needs with those you live and work with to increase awareness. For example, your anxiety around small and large group gatherings, eating indoors at restaurants, or decisions regarding remote work and school.
- Consider utilizing worthwhile apps like **myStrength** (use access code START for free access) to help with managing anxiety, stress, grief, and loss issues, and more!
<https://www.wellspanphilhaven.org/myStrength-online-tools>

And don't forget to access your **WellSpan Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** sessions. The demands and pressures of life can cause everyone to experience problems from time to time; *you are not alone*.

WellSpan's EAP is a confidential and voluntary program designed for employees, spouses and dependent family members who want to seek help and receive support. [Find available providers at www.WellSpan.org/EAP](http://www.WellSpan.org/EAP) or [review your company's WellSpan EAP flyer/brochure for how to access services](#).

Questions? Give us a call at 800.673.2514, Monday-Friday, between 7:30 am – 4:30 pm. ***We are happy to help!***