

## When you should contact us

There are a lot of good reasons to look for mental health assistance and support. Whether you are struggling with long-standing difficulties or are experiencing an increase in mental health concerns, we are here to help. In the current context, you might be noticing some of the following things:

- Increase in anxiety
- Increased worry
- Feeling exceptionally overwhelmed
- Difficulty with motivation to do things you need to do
- Impulsive behavior
- Difficulty managing anger or frustration
- Crying spells
- Depression
- Family/relational conflict
- Grieving

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms and they are feeling difficult to manage, you may want to consider contacting a mental health professional.



Lesley Baird Chapin, Psy.D.

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## Pauquette Moves Services to Telehealth

The week prior to the Safer at Home order, the Pauquette Center for Psychological Services moved clinic services to a completely telehealth delivery system. This move was intended to address the emerging safety needs of our patients as well as our employees and to do our part in the efforts to flatten the COVID-19 curve for our healthcare providers. This service option has allowed our patients to participate in therapy sessions from home, or more easily schedule and attend them according to their current schedules. During this uncertain time, mental health needs may be increasing and anxiety may be peaking for many and we strongly believe that continuing to offer high-quality services is more important than ever.

Our telehealth technology is fairly simple, easy-to-use, and does not require any additional equipment other than an internet connection. Phone services may also be available in the event that internet access is not accessible. Additional information including detailed instructions for accessing our telehealth delivery app can be found on our website at [www.pauquette.com](http://www.pauquette.com) under COVID-19 telehealth resources. Pauquette continues to accept most major insurances including Medicaid and Medicare and we have worked diligently with these providers to ensure that services rendered via telehealth, and even exclusively by telephone when needed, will be covered whenever possible.

Research indicates that when done effectively, telehealth is a successful format for counseling services for most patients. We encourage anyone who feels they may benefit from mental health services at this time to call us and schedule an appointment to see if it can be a good fit for them in the current context.

### Free Webinars

***Pauquette is offering a variety of free webinars for community members to attend either live or via recording. These topics are variable including information related to stress management, mindfulness, helping children cope with anxiety, distress tolerance skills, and much more. Information and previously recorded webinars will be available on our website at [www.pauquette.com](http://www.pauquette.com) under Services and Free Webinars.***

## Difficulty with Isolation

The context of this global pandemic has been trying for many people for a variety of reasons. Although everyone's situation comes with a unique set of stressors, there are things that evidence suggests will be helpful to many people when managing the shift to more isolated environments.

## Daily Checklist for Quarantine

- Get outside
- Moderate exercise
- Balanced eating
- Add some structure and routine to your life (not every little thing needs to be scheduled, but general guidelines are helpful)
- Maintain somewhat typical sleeping patterns (save "weekend" sleeping patterns for the weekend)
- Keep your morning routine
  - Get up at a reasonable time
  - Shower
  - Brush teeth
  - Dress/groom for the day
- Go outside for at least 20 minutes daily
- Do something that makes you feel confident, competent or checks something off your long-term to-do list
- Connect with folks you're physically with in a meaningful way
- Initiate connection with people you're not physically with in a meaningful way (virtually)
- Reflect on what you're doing well or what is going well
- Do something you enjoy
- Do something creative or learn something new
- Make an effort to assume the best about yourself and others

## Coping with COVID: Distress Tolerance Skills for Managing the Pandemic

### Mindful Thoughts from Dr. Chapin

As a cognitive behavioral therapist, specifically one who focuses on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) one of my approaches to managing difficult situations and emotions has typically been to bolster skills in relevant areas. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, distress tolerance skills appear exceptionally helpful. This is all about getting through difficult situations that you cannot change without making them worse. If this doesn't sound perfect for the times, I don't know what is. Here are a few distress tolerance skills that you may find especially helpful to navigate the distress associated with different aspects of the current context. The following are a selection and adaptation of the distress tolerance skills created by Marsha Linehan and taught in DBT. While there are a number of distress tolerance skills, this edition will focus primarily on the distraction skills. We will cover additional skills in future newsletters.

#### Distraction

##### Activities:

These should be things that actually pull your attention to something else. Doing a puzzle, a word-search, watching television, exercising, cleaning, writing a letter, baking, etc. are all examples of activities that may be distracting for some people. What serves as a good distraction is individual to the person, but finding something that really grabs and diverts your attention for a while is helpful for all of us.

##### Comparisons:

Sometimes, comparing ourselves or our situation to others' can be a helpful way to gain perspective during times that we are feeling really badly. For example, if I am used to working outside of the home, I may notice that I am very stressed trying to balance working from home and caring for or homeschooling my children. Comparing my own situation to others who are unable to be with their children during this difficult time may help alleviate some of my frustration and elicit more feelings of hope and appreciation despite the frustration. Comparisons should always be made with self-compassion rather than judgment because there is no "wrong" way to feel. The intention is to add perspective.

##### Contributing:

Finding a way in which we can contribute to others can often distract from all of the things that we *cannot* do and move them to what we *can* do. It may also bring about a sense of pride. There are a wide variety of contributions people can make. Things as small as reaching out to others to check on them, writing someone a card or a letter, doing something extra nice for your partner or children, or making a meal for a neighbor could fit, as could monetary donations, volunteering time/effort/supplies, or ordering take-out or pre-paying for services to support small businesses. There are many ways to contribute.

##### Elicit other Emotions:

When you're stuck in a particular feeling, sometimes it's helpful to turn your experience purposefully in another direction. Do things that bring about other emotional experiences purposefully. For example, listening to different kinds of music can make us feel pumped up, calmed down, nostalgic, etc. Talking to certain people, watching certain media content, etc. can do this as well.

If you would like to learn more about DBT skills, coping skills, or you are struggling during these difficult times, please reach out for help. The Pauquette Center remains committed to serving our community members and are prepared to help you with our telehealth options. Please call us at 608-742-5518 to get started.

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Vice President Pauquette Center

DBT-Linehan Board of Certification, Certified Clinician™

Contact us for more information: (608) 742-5518 – Portage Office

[www.pauquette.com](http://www.pauquette.com)

