

# foundations

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## Voice of Recovery: Alexa

Alexa is a Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Certified Peer Specialist. She helps youth starting at age 16 on their recovery journey. Her introduction to behavioral health services began in high school. Mental health challenges disrupted her life. Alexa's high school asked her not to attend school but suggested she go to a partial program until she felt better. She was in this program twice, and the second time, she admitted there was something wrong. Behavioral health services have helped Alexa. She has become more confident, learned to love herself and be more patient, but she says everything is a continuous process.



Becoming a YYA Peer Specialist was introduced to Alexa on three different occasions. The third time, she decided to look into it. Funding in her county, from The Healthy Transitions grant, made the Certified Peer Specialist training possible. She says the training was nice. She met a lot of good people and her employer was very supportive.

"As a peer support, we help people through our lived experience because we have lived experience," Alexa said.



"A youth peer support will help a peer struggling with anxiety, depression, or isolating a lot by introducing them to places they can go to find positive outlets, like hiking, coffee shops, parks and museums. If they have anxiety about being around people, it's good to introduce them to a small place like a coffee shop and then somewhere larger like a baseball game," Alexa said.

Alexa said she had a music teacher in high school who said, "If you are going to put up a wall about something new, you won't be able to do it at all because you already closed your mind to it. But if you go in with an open mind, you are more likely to have a better outcome." Her teacher meant it for music, but Alexa took it as a life lesson. Alexa likes breaking the system and finding different ways to approach things.



Alexa tries to be an optimistic light and encourages peers to quit smoking, meet with their PCP, lose weight, or join a gym, and she helps them achieve their goal. She is energetic and positive. If someone is struggling, she tries to lighten the mood. Alexa makes time for self-care, so she's able to help people. Her Personal Medicine (things she does to be well) includes music, art and poetry, helping others, and being outside and doing things in nature. Her dream job is to become a motivational, inspirational speaker and be able to travel.

# Tips for Managing Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Choose a healthy diet

- Having a healthy diet can help reduce your risk of some diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and high cholesterol.
- A healthy diet includes:
  - Fruits and vegetables
  - Whole grains, such as whole-grain bread or pasta, brown rice, or oatmeal
  - Low-fat dairy products, such as low-fat milk, cheese, or yogurt
  - Low-fat protein, such as chicken, fish, eggs, or beans
- Try not to eat a lot of foods containing high amounts of sugar, salt (sodium), and bad fats (saturated fat and trans-fat). Examples of foods with bad fats: margarine, butter, ice cream, bacon, vegetable shortening, fried foods, processed foods (crackers, potato chips).
- Stay hydrated—drink plenty of water. Drink water instead of sugary drinks.



## Stay active

- Adults should get at least 150 minutes of moderate activity (exercise) per week. This should be spread out over a 7-day period.
- Daily exercise can improve your mood and reduce stress and anxiety. It can help reduce the chance of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.
- There are many activities that can be done around the house or outside to keep active.
  - Go for a walk, run, or bike ride when the weather is nice, dance to your favorite music, follow exercise videos, or see if there are free virtual classes.



## Get a good night's sleep

- Adults should have 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night. Children need more.
- Have a regular sleep routine. Get up and go to bed at the same time every day. Don't take long naps during the day.
- Don't drink caffeine or eat large meals late in the day.
- Keep the temperature in your bedroom cool.
- Do something relaxing before bed. Take a warm bath. Do light stretches. Listen to relaxing music. Do deep breathing exercises.
- Limit the amount of time you spend on your phone or computer before bed.



### **Stay connected and take time to relax**

- It is important to keep in regular contact with family and friends by telephone, text, or video chat.
- Make time to do an activity you find relaxing or to start a new hobby.



### **Stay on track with vaccinations**

- Children six months of age and older and adults should get a flu vaccination every fall. It has been proven safe and effective at preventing the flu or decreasing the severity of symptoms.
- It is important for children to stay up to date on their routine vaccinations. Vaccines prevent serious illnesses such as measles, whooping cough, and the flu. Parents should work with their child's doctor to follow the recommended vaccination schedule.



### **Take medicines as prescribed**

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you can get a 90-day supply of your medicine to limit pharmacy trips.
- Work with the pharmacist to have all medicines filled at the same time to decrease visits to the pharmacy.
- Instead of going inside the pharmacy to pick up your medicine, use drive-thru windows, curbside services, or delivery services. Another option is to use mail-order pharmacy services if available.



## Helping Children Stay Active While Staying at Home



With COVID-19 closures and virtual school, children may be getting a lot less physical activity while staying at home. It can also be harder to be active in the winter. Childhood obesity is still a serious health concern, especially with challenges from COVID-19. Here are some ideas for staying active from home.

### Take Breaks from Sitting and Screen Time

If your child is going to school online, schedule a few 20-minute breaks throughout the day. It is good to take a break from staring at screens and to get up and stretch, stand, or move around. The same goes for taking breaks from phones, tablets, or watching TV.

\*Idea: do jumping jacks during commercial breaks or have a push-up competition.

### More Ways to Get Moving

Physical activity is good for both our bodies and minds. For children, physical activity is linked to better sleep, better mood, and better grades.

Some ideas for your child to get exercise throughout the day:

- Play an active video game.
- Do household chores, like cleaning up a room or vacuuming.
- Take a walk before or after dinner.
- Have a family dance party.

Check out videos and interactive tools on [health.gov](https://www.health.gov) - Move Your Way:

- Video: [Tips for Getting Active as a Family](#)
- Video: [Tips for Getting Active Indoors](#)
- [Activity Planner](#)

Remember, this is a challenging time for everyone and can be particularly stressful. Small, healthy habits every day and sticking to a routine can help. Find more COVID-19 resources at [members.ccbh.com/covid-19-information](https://members.ccbh.com/covid-19-information).

## Quitting Smoking and COVID-19



Smokers and their loved ones may be worried about the connection between COVID-19 and smoking. COVID-19 affects many of the same organs as smoking. It can be especially dangerous for anyone with heart or lung disease. In general, smoking weakens your immune system, which makes it harder to fight off illness or disease.

### Take Steps to Quit Today

The good news is you can take control of your health by quitting, and your body starts to heal right away. Within the first few weeks to few months, your lungs start to work better, and your risk for a heart attack goes down. The longer you go without smoking, the more your body can recover.

If you are trying to quit smoking, or trying to stay smoke-free after quitting, it may be hard dealing with stress from the pandemic. But not smoking (or using any tobacco) is one of the best things you can do for your health right now.

### Quit Smoking Resources

- [Members.ccbh.com](https://members.ccbh.com): tobacco articles
- [Smokefree.gov](https://smokefree.gov): resources to make a personalized plan, set a quit date, manage stress, and more.
- [PA Free Quitline](https://1800quitnow.com): 1.800.QUIT.NOW
- [World Health Organization: Quitting Tobacco](https://www.who.int/tobacco)

## Good Health, Better World Podcast



“Good Health, Better World” is a new podcast about important health care topics in our communities. The podcast focuses on “social determinants of health”—things like where people are born and live, their economic status, and their education level—that can affect health. It is important to look at these challenges and take action to address them, because better health for everyone means stronger communities.

“Good Health, Better World” covers a different topic each episode, such as employment, housing, and care for the LGBTQ+ community, through conversations with community leaders and health care experts.

[Learn more and listen to the podcast now on the Postindustrial podcast page.](#)

It is also available on Spotify and the Podcasts app. New content is added weekly, with a total of eight episodes.

## Getting Treatment When You Need It

We believe that members should not wait long for behavioral health appointments. So, we work hard to make sure you get treatment without much wait time. In a life-threatening emergency, you should get an appointment right away. If it is not a life-threatening emergency, you should get an appointment within:

- **1 hour** for an emergency that is not life-threatening
- **24 hours** for urgent needs
- **7 calendar days** for routine behavioral health needs

If you have any problems getting an appointment soon enough with your current provider, or if you do not have a treatment provider but need one, please call the Community Care toll-free customer service number for your county listed below. Our Customer Service staff will help you get an appointment.

It helps to be prepared and know who to call before a crisis happens. If you need help finding crisis services in your area, please call the Community Care toll-free member services number for your county. A customer service representative can help you, or you can go to your nearest Emergency Department.

County	Customer Service	County	Customer Service
Adams	1.866.738.9849	McKean	1.866.878.6046
Allegheny	1.800.553.7499	Mifflin	1.866.878.6046
Bedford	1.866.483.2908	Monroe	1.866.473.5862
Berks	1.866.292.7886	Montour	1.866.878.6046
Blair	1.855.520.9715	Northumberland	1.866.878.6046
Bradford	1.866.878.6046	Pike	1.866.473.5862
Cameron	1.866.878.6046	Potter	1.866.878.6046
Carbon	1.866.473.5862	Schuylkill	1.866.878.6046
Centre	1.866.878.6046	Snyder	1.866.878.6046
Chester	1.866.622.4228	Somerset	1.866.483.2908
Clarion	1.866.878.6046	Sullivan	1.866.878.6046
Clearfield	1.866.878.6046	Susquehanna	1.866.668.4696
Clinton	1.855.520.9787	Tioga	1.866.878.6046
Columbia	1.866.878.6046	Union	1.866.878.6046
Elk	1.866.878.6046	Warren	1.866.878.6046
Erie	1.855.224.1777	Wayne	1.866.878.6046
Forest	1.866.878.6046	Wyoming	1.866.668.4696
Huntingdon	1.866.878.6046	York	1.866.542.0299
Jefferson	1.866.878.6046	TTY (Dial 711) Request:	1.833.545.9191
Juniata	1.866.878.6046	En español	1.866.229.3187
Lackawanna	1.866.668.4696		
Luzerne	1.866.668.4696		
Lycoming	1.855.520.9787		

## Annual Member Satisfaction Survey

The annual Member Satisfaction Survey will be mailed out in early 2021. Members and families are randomly selected to receive a survey about your or your child's services. Community Care contracts with a company called Symphony Performance Health (SPH Analytics) to conduct the survey. You will see this name on the information you receive in the mail. The surveys are anonymous, and all information is kept confidential.

If you get a survey, Community Care would be excited to hear from you. Please take a few moments to fill it out. There is a postage paid envelope that makes it easy for you to send it back. There will also be a link if you want to complete it from a computer online. If you would rather do it over the phone, there is a number you can call, and someone will help you complete it, if that is easier. Spanish speaking members also have the option of requesting a copy of the survey in Spanish or completing it over the phone with a Spanish speaking representative at SPH. Your answers are completely confidential—we don't know who returns the surveys, and your answers do not affect your benefits in any way. The survey is an important way for us to know if members and families are satisfied with the services they receive; we use member feedback to make improvements in our services. We'd love to hear what you think! Community Care is offering chances to win a \$10 Visa gift card by completing the survey.

Please note—if you live in Susquehanna, Lycoming, Lackawanna, or Luzerne counties in the Northeast a different company called Advocacy Alliance conducts the satisfaction survey.