



PUTNAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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A PHAB-ACCREDITED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 22, 2020

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Mental Health Month Spreads Message Early:

Tools2Thrive Workshops Launch Online by Putnam's Mental Health Association

BREWSTER, NY—For more than 70 years, Mental Health America has led the observance of May as Mental Health Month. This year, faced with the global coronavirus pandemic, the release of the toolkit is not only timely but could help more people than before. This month, Putnam's Mental Health Association (MHA) launched a new online workshop group known as Tools2Thrive, building on the national theme.

“Tools2Thrive is for anyone seeking to reduce their own stress while effectively navigating the more challenging relationships in their lives,” said Megan Castellano, executive director of the Mental Health Association in Putnam. “And those relationships may be with family members, partners, friends, co-workers or others.” The workshops start Wednesday, April 22, with weekly sessions, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. In addition, on the first and third Wednesdays of the month, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., two more tailored programs will focus specifically on family issues.

“We have done an amazing job,” said County Executive MaryEllen Odell. “Our citizens have stepped up. By practicing social and physical distancing, and by wearing masks in public, we have actually flattened the curve. As we begin to move forward, we must continue these practices, and focus on building resilience and promoting mental health for all. A new economic reality is upon us. There is little doubt it will bring challenges, but by working together we can prevail.”

The unfortunate truth for 2020 is that Mental Health Month will become Mental Health Year. The Tools2Thrive sessions will focus on building skills, sharing resources, tools and techniques related to self-care and validation, establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries,

essential and effective communications skills, vulnerability and acceptance, and relationship dynamics.

Mental health matters, now more than ever before. Mental Health America encourages everyone to go online in May and help meet the goal of one million Americans taking their online mental health screening.

“If ever there was a time to do this, the time is now,” said Megan Castellano. The anonymous online screenings for depression and anxiety, both in English and Spanish, can be found at <https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools>, along with other mental health screenings and surveys. These online screening tools are meant to be a quick snapshot of your mental health. If results indicate symptoms of a mental illness, a mental health provider, such as a doctor or a therapist, should be seen for full assessment.

Joining Putnam’s Tools2Thrive workshops can be done from a computer, tablet or smartphone through the GoToMeetings platform. Instructions and the weekly link are posted on the MHA website at www.mhaputnam.org. The Tools2Thrive link appears on the home page, under the column on the right, headed “online Support Group, Video Meetings and Voice Teleconferencing.” Scroll down through the MHA’s other online offerings and the direct GoToMeeting video link and voice teleconferencing information are both available.

The MHA in Putnam County promotes a vision of wellness and recovery for individuals and their family members coping with mental health issues. The MHA provides advocacy for people with mental illnesses to overcome discrimination, education to enhance public understanding of mental health issues, and resources to assist residents locate and acquire needed support and services.

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services, provided directly and through collaboration, include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit our County website at www.putnamcountyny.com/coronavirus; or visit our social media sites @PutnamHealthNY on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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