

## Mental Health During Times of Crisis

By, Officer Jim South

COVID-19 has changed all of our lives and the way we go about our daily business. We are home more often, which is nice for family time and togetherness, but it can also make things more stressful for everyone.

This is especially true for our children as they try to adjust to a new “normal” way of life. Kids are very adaptable, but can become stressed. They need socialization and are often missing out on time with friends during this global pandemic. As our kids prepare to go back to school in new and different ways, it is imperative that we pay attention to their mental health needs.

We need to be continually aware of signs that children are struggling with their mental health. Children can become distant, non-social, angry, scared, upset, confused- the list goes on. Though these may be behaviors or emotions that we see on a regular basis, some could be newly developed, evolving and growing in intensity. It is important to check in with our children during these stressful times. Remain open and honest, and ask questions related to how they are feeling. If we notice that something doesn't seem or feel right, it's important to get our children the assistance they need.

Kids aren't the only ones going through a lot right now. Parents and guardians are experiencing a multitude of stressors from working at home, job loss, canceled vacations, and the unknown of what's to come during COVID-19. These factors can become traumatic events in our lives and cause a potential crisis. We all face situations of crisis— it's how we respond to the crisis that can make a difference. Most of us have the capacity and ability to respond with



resilience and positivity. However, some may have a more difficult time dealing with crises.

It is important to stick together and help each other during times of crisis. We need to take care of ourselves, each other, our families, friends and neighbors. Take note of any signs and symptoms of trauma in the people in your life, such as depression, mood swings, alcohol and/or substance abuse, or unusual behavior. We need to reach out, ask questions and help those that may be struggling.

Look out for our seniors, our vulnerable, and our less fortunate. We need to seek them out, check in on them and offer assistance. If you haven't heard from someone in a while, reach out to them. If you haven't seen a neighbor for quite some time, knock on their door and spend time with them.

As we continue to navigate through COVID-19, we need to stick together! The St. Anthony Police Department takes mental health very seriously. We have many resources for the community, if needed. Simply reach out to anyone in our department to receive help, information, and resources.