



City Manager's

COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

City Manager Dee Williams-Ridley provided this update on the City of Berkeley's COVID-19 response to the City Council. The reports, which are issued most weekdays, can be viewed at cityofberkeley.info/covid19-city-manager-updates.

Warm Line for BUSD students

Throughout our EOC response, we've adapted to find new ways to provide services to our community.

School closures meant that BUSD's high school students no longer had on-site access to Berkeley Mental Health Counselors -- a problem compounded by the fact that the needs for mental health support are even greater now.

In response, Berkeley Mental Health two weeks ago launched a "warm line" for students from Berkeley High and Berkeley Technical Academy.

Students can now call (510) 981-5240 to connect with a licensed mental health professional for support, consultation, and resources Monday through Friday, 11:30am-4pm. Services are available in English and Spanish.

This is one of several strategies our Mental Health team is using to continue services during this pandemic. We have also expanded hours for our [daytime crisis line](#). Community members experiencing uncomfortable thoughts and emotions can call (510) 981-5244 Monday through Friday 10am-5pm to connect with a trained counselor who will connect them with resources and determine if an in-person evaluation is needed.

Our [community message about the warm line](#) pushed the information to those who may not know about it.

Mental Health Services Survey still open

We are continuing to [solicit community input](#) on mental health service needs through Berkeley Considers. Our Mental Health Division will use these comments to help craft a plan for how we'll use Mental Health Services Act funds over the next three years. [The survey](#) is open through May 29.



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Staying connected while sheltering at home

Sheltering in place, while critical for containing COVID-19, can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation, especially for those who live alone. Maintaining connections to friends or family is an important part of [looking after one's mental health](#) during this time.

We sent a message to community members today recommending [creative ways to keep in touch](#) while we're separated physically. A few ideas include:

- Gathering for meals virtually, or cooking the same recipe together over video chat
- Syncing up to watch a TV show or movie together
- Playing games - combine efforts to solve a crossword puzzle, or host a virtual charades party on Zoom
- Surprise loved ones with letters or cards in the mail

Resources

CDC Resource: Coping with job stress and building resilience during COVID-19

COVID-19 has changed many parts of our lives, including the way we work. The threat posed by this disease can prompt emotional overwhelm, and workplace stress can lead to burnout. How we cope with these emotions and stress affects not just our own well-being, but that of our families, our friends, and our co-workers. The CDC has prepared a helpful guide on [managing workplace stress during the pandemic](#), which covers recognizing what stress looks like, steps to build resilience, and where to turn if you need help.

State preparations for wildfire season

Governor Newsom announced plans to dedicate additional resources to the state's fire safety and disaster preparedness efforts. The additional resources include a new Wildfire Safety Division at the Public Utilities Commission to oversee utilities including PG&E, \$85.7 million in funding for Cal Fire to support surge capacity, additional fire engines, and more.

We're [encouraging residents to get prepared](#) too. Now is the time to sign up for emergency alerts, pack or refresh go-bags, and practice evacuating.