

# CONNECTIONS

FEBRUARY, 2021

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## FIRST RESPONDER FOCUS

### Addicted to Awake: Sleep Deprivation in the Fire Service

By Jacqueline and Sean Toomey, **Fire Engineering** (Used with the permission of fireengineering.com)

*This is part 1 of 2 of an article that outlines the detriments of not getting enough sleep. While the article focuses on those who work in the Fire Service, the information should be helpful for anyone who has sleep issues.*

Firefighter health should not be “collateral damage” from a career on the job. The inadvertent destruction from being *addicted to awake* is one of the greatest threats that firefighters face today. Recently, a chief told me he didn’t know if his members thought the topic of sleep was information worth learning. All I had to ask was, “Did you know sleep deprivation is medically linked to the leading killers of firefighters including heart attack, cancer, and suicide?” Let’s remember the time firefighters weren’t interested in wearing self-contained breathing apparatus, turning in gear to be washed for cancer prevention, or quitting the era of smoking in the firehouse. This speaks volumes to our resistance toward firefighter health and wellness. It is our chiefs’ responsibility to pave the way for valuable information and trainings to reach the department, which will have a lasting impact on their members’ lives.

### Sleeping for Your Life

The hard truth is that almost 40 percent of firefighters suffer from a sleep disorder. According to a screening of 6,933 firefighters, 80 percent of those who tested positive had no prior awareness or previous diagnosis of their condition. This one study, conducted by Laura K. Barger, Ph.D., instructor in medicine at Harvard Medical School, alone may have saved 2,219 firefighter lives! Whether firefighters have interest in learning about sleep doesn’t change the dire matter: sleep deficiency is a health-wrecking problem that needs to be addressed. Once we acknowledge the problem, we can implement solutions to mitigate sleep deprivation and lower the risks for heart attack, cancer, and more.

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Greetings City Employees,

This month we are introducing a new segment to our newsletter called *It Takes a Village*. Here, we will focus on information for anyone in a parenting role because many of our employees are either raising kids or have children in their life and it can cause a great deal of stress to try and support kids in the world we find ourselves in. One interpretation of the well-known phrase “It takes a village to raise a child” is that caregivers of children need the support of the whole village to raise healthy and happy kids and we hope to encourage connection around this idea.

On a related note, we plan to offer a short monthly segment called *Tips for Raising Resilient Kids*. Each month we will feature one tip so that you can take some time to try that out without feeling overwhelmed by many new changes all at once.

There are a variety of other topics to read about this month so we hope you find something useful!

Be well,

~ The EAP Team



CITY OF MADISON EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
2300 S. Park St., Suite 111  
Madison, WI 53703  
[www.cityofmadison.com/employee-assistance-program](http://www.cityofmadison.com/employee-assistance-program)

Tresa Martinez, EAP Manager: (608) 266-6561

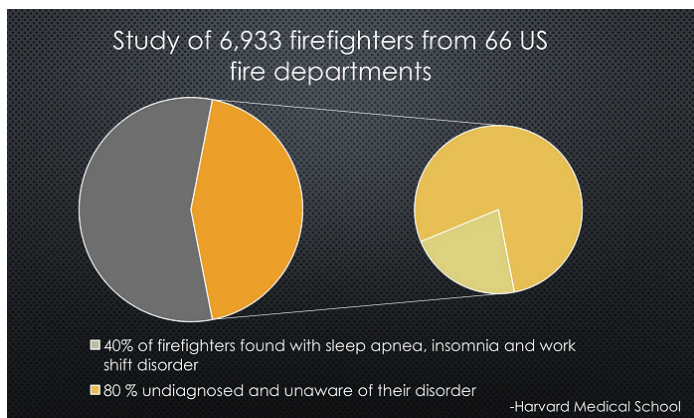
Arlyn Gonzalez, EAP Specialist: (608) 266-6561  
Provides bilingual EAP services in English and Spanish

Lori Wessel, EAP Specialist: (608) 266-6561

Sherri Amos, Confidential Program Support: (608) 266-6561

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Normalizing chronic sleep loss is a mortal addiction; it is taking out our members one life at a time. A chronic lack of sleep contributes to various biological changes that ultimately lead to disease development, *independent* of primary sleep disorders. Dr. Faith S. Luyster of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and Sleep Research Society states that chronic sleep deficiency is causal in the development and exacerbation of cardiovascular and metabolic diseases and, ultimately, a shortened life span. Let's bring to light this fatal issue to create a call to action to initiate a direct conversation that, no matter what rank you serve as, challenges the status quo on how sleep is undervalued in the world of firefighting and the real things we can do to improve it.



Running calls while the rest of the world is asleep is inherently part of the job. No schedule preference will alter the nature of the emergency services. But I am not here to debate whether a 24-or 48-hour schedule is better. I am not here to debate factors out of our control (night runs). I am here to inform on a rising health crisis and to spread awareness that sleep loss is not an insurmountable problem. There are surprisingly viable, proven solutions that we can implement within the demands of any firefighter schedule to mitigate the effects of sleep deprivation and improve the quality of sleep you receive on or off shift, regardless of how little it is.

Before we can fix any sleep condition, we first must admit there is a problem. We explicitly deny it, convince ourselves we don't need it, and power through. But on some level, we all know we need sleep. That said, it is difficult to achieve the adequate sleep we need 1) from the inevitable night runs and factors in personal family life, and 2) because we are immersed in a culture that deems sleeping an indulgent, sinful activity at best.

We've all heard the phrase, "You snooze, you lose" or "I'll sleep when I'm dead". How about "I'll be fine with just one more cup of coffee"? We might as well be pumped full of an intravenous diet of stimulants. We live in a society that glorifies activity over restoration to the point that we wear the dark circles under our eyes like a badge of honor. It's too bad our stimulated culture doesn't inform us of what Professor

Matthew Walker, director of the University of California—Berkeley's Centre for Human Sleep Science, states: "No aspect of our biology is left unscathed by sleep deprivation. Sleep is the greatest legal performance enhancing drug that most people are probably neglecting." Point is, if you're getting less than six hours of sleep per night, your testosterone decreases, your time to physical exhaustion drops by up to 30 percent, the ability of your lungs to expire carbon dioxide and inhale oxygen decreases, and the less sleep you have, the lower your peak muscular strength will be. Who needs sleep to be an effective firefighter, right?

Have you ever wondered why firefighters become statistics to cancer, suicide, heart attack, and metabolic illnesses? For those of us asking these hard questions, our attention is focused merely on external influences, yet the underlying cause is rarely to never addressed. We all know the leading causes of firefighter death are cancer, heart attack, and suicide. However, a growing body of medical research points in another direction: sleep deprivation. For far too long, we've been blaming the fire when the house burns down, but we continue to ignore the arsonist holding the match. The arsonist behind countless firefighter deaths is sleep deprivation.

Although exposures and other variables certainly contribute to health issues like cancer, not treating the underlying cause is a fundamental flaw of how our society functions—treat the symptom and not the disease; basically, fix it after it's broken. My goal is to provide solutions before it is too late. However, I am going up against a culture that is expected to readily profit the global energy drink industry \$84.8 billion by 2025. Addicted to being awake—profitable yet so costly. The cost comes in the cascading effects of being awake for too long, and that leave our bodies with a lowered immune response, hormones that are in disarray, and a cardiovascular system under extreme pressure. These effects accumulate into chronic illness and disease and are a ticking time bomb for how long we will last. Let's look at the real-life consequences of what it means to be *addicted to awake*.

*Tune in next month for part 2 or continue reading at [www.fireengineering.com](http://www.fireengineering.com).*

**Jacqueline Toomey** co-created the First Responder Sleep Recovery Program with her firefighter husband, Sean. She received her BA from Regis University, completed masters-level coursework in education at Metro State University, and trained at the Nutrition Therapy Institute. As a three-time Yoga Alliance certified instructor, Jacqueline also co-teaches sleep deprivation mitigation trainings with Sean.

**Sean Toomey** is a career firefighter and fire-science instructor. He received two bachelor's degrees from Colorado State University and is employed by the Denver (CO) Fire Department.

*The Toomeys teach the First Responder Sleep Recovery Program together at fire departments and conferences nationally.*

# LEADERSHIP *Matters*

## Leading from the Middle in a Crisis

By Camille S. Johnson Ph.D., *Psychology Today* (Used with the author's permission)

### *Communication tips for leading others during the COVID-19 crisis.*

We all have expectations about what leaders do when a crisis hits. In times of uncertainty, we look to our leaders to give us confidence, direction, and reassurance. There are whole handbooks on crisis leadership, but the advice seems to apply mostly to folks who have the power and authority to decide what happens. What about the middle managers? The department chairs, the principals, the work leads, and the managers who do not have the authority to make the big decisions but are face-to-face with employees, parents, and students filled with uncertainty and anxiety? How can they lead when they lack decision-making authority and don't have access to all the information?

Here's a secret – no leader, no matter how high up the ladder, has enough authority to create 100% certainty and no one knows everything about a situation. Like any other leader, leaders in the middle can help their followers through effective communication strategies. Here are few evidence-based communication tips.

### **Control your communication strategy.**

As a leader in the middle, you might feel as though you have responsibility without authority. And, as your direct reports come to you with questions and needs, you are likely to feel increasingly out of control. You want to help them but don't feel like you have the information or authority to answer their questions. To increase your feelings of control, you might revert to your most instinctual self. Your first task is to manage your own stress. If you have a tendency towards perfectionism, you might start micro-managing others or taking over their responsibilities. If you have a tendency towards avoiding confrontation, you might stop responding. When you feel your default panic response taking over, take a moment and focus on what you can control—the actions and messages (nonverbal and verbal) that you send out to your followers.

Before you respond in a way that alleviates your anxiety or fulfills your need to be doing something, take a moment to think about what others need. Your followers want what you want—consistency, predictability, and reassurance. An email that commiserates with your followers about inaction at the top or shares dire predictions does not provide reassurance. Be flexible in your response and adapt to the situation. Focus on communicating the following:

### **Explain the processes or steps that are being taken in the decision-making process.**

**Organizational justice** theory has shown that when followers understand the decision-making process and the information used in the process, they are more accepting of outcomes. Let your followers know what sources are being consulted by decision-makers (e.g. the State Department of Public Health), explain the timeline (e.g. managers are meeting daily at 8:30), and explain who is part of the decision-making group (e.g. leaders of all units will be meeting and communicating to their employees).

**Be truthful.** This may mean admitting that there are unknown factors or that the situation may change. In order for your communications to be reliable, you must acknowledge the uncertainties and avoid sharing rumors or unconfirmed information. While you may feel the urge to demonstrate that you are knowledgeable, it is most important to demonstrate that you are truthful. Overly optimistic or unrealistic claims might provide a short-term boost for followers, but when contradicted will lead them to doubt you as a source of information and increase anxiety and uncertainty.

**Be predictable.** It is tempting to send out information as soon as it becomes available. And, certainly, things are changing so quickly that one could easily become a reactive communicator. But, it is also important to be predictable in communications. A check-in with your team or staff each morning, followed by an update at the end of the day gives people a sense of rhythm and certainty. Decide what is information that they can act on right away, and what is information that they can process later and only send “emergency text” if they need to act on the information right away. This is especially true if an announcement from a source higher in the organization is pending. Sending too many messages can lead people to feel overwhelmed. Trust in the communication power that has been delegated to you and in the power that you have delegated to others.

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**Be emotionally stable and provide solutions.** There is a difference between acknowledging the emotional experiences of your followers and using communications for your own catharsis. Demonstrate the emotional response you want to see in your followers. Research shows that emotions are contagious and the emotions of leaders are especially contagious (Johnson, 2008). Negative emotions such as anxiety and fear are valid responses to the current situation. Acknowledge those emotions and then provide followers with a path to more positive emotional states. For example, acknowledging fears that people might have about working conditions could be coupled with statements of actions that the company is taking to ensure safety. Or, you might reassure people that the organization has faced similar challenges in the past and worked through them. People might also be directed to ways in which they can help others. Research has shown that thinking about others in times of stress reduces self-focus and increases well-being (Dunn & Norton, 2014).

**Lead your followers to higher ground.** When we think about our actions in their most concrete terms, we feel them most viscerally, and this leads us to seek activities that maximize immediate positive feelings and can undermine long-term goals. For example, when we think about the taste of food and the experience of eating a pizza versus a salad, we are more likely to choose a less healthful pizza over a healthful salad. The memory of melted cheese and crusty bread and short-term pleasures overwhelms our pursuit of long-term goals like being healthy. Similarly, if employees think about their work in concrete terms, such as merging spreadsheets or ticking of forms, it feels less motivating.

However, if you can remind them of their part in the larger mission, it increases motivation. So, a job uploading forms, for example, could be seen as tedious and unimportant work or framed as sustaining the educational enterprise or helping the company advance important research. Again, asking people to think at a higher level reduces self-focus and can increase well-being and goal pursuit (Balcretis, 2020).

Regardless of where you are in an organization, you have opportunities to lead through effective communication. Your responsibility is to help your direct reports feel reassured and confident. Explain the process, be truthful and predictable, provide solutions and emotional stability, and lead them to higher ground.

## Black MENTal Health

By Ryan C. Warner, Ph.D., CRC, **Psychology Today** (Used with the author's permission)

### *4 tips to promote wellness.*

Although mental health challenges affect everyone regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, and other cultural factors, Black men may face additional psychosocial stressors and systemic barriers compared to other groups.

For instance, it is well-documented that this population experiences lower quality healthcare services, disproportionate neighborhood stressors (e.g., poor housing, lack of resources, and violence), economic disparities (e.g., poverty and unemployment), and systemic racism. Today, the accumulation of generational trauma, COVID-19, social unrest, police brutality, and other stressors may further exacerbate these challenges.

Due to these concerns, research indicates that Black men are at high risk for adverse mental health outcomes relative to other ethnicities. For instance, statistics indicate that Black adults are more likely to have feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and worthlessness compared to White adults. Furthermore, the death rate from suicide for Black men was more than four times greater than for Black women. Additionally, among Black men, the prevalence of depression concurrent with substance use disorders has increased over the years from 9.49% to 21.34%.

How do we address these ongoing issues? One step may be for us to first recognize and normalize talking about mental health and wellness.

Stress is certainly a normal part of our lives and can be an important catalyst of growth and performance. However, when stress becomes difficult to manage, this may be negatively impactful to our overall well-being. As Black men, if we can be more aware of the common signs of poor stress management, then conquering our stressors may become a bit more feasible.

When stress feels overwhelming, it can impact us physically, mentally, and socially. Physically, we may notice disruption to our sleep patterns, loss of appetite, or overeating, which can lead to lower energy and more frequent sickness. We may experience emotional or psychological distress, leading to anger, low motivation, anxiety, or even hopelessness. Furthermore, when chronically distressed, we may socially withdraw, isolate, or disengage in activities we once enjoyed. When these responses add to the original stressors, it can begin to feel unmanageable for some.

According to **Dr. Sue Varma**, discussing “The Four Ms of Mental Health” can be helpful to mitigate stress and improve well-being.

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## 1. Meaningful Connection

Establishing meaningful connections with others is a valuable tool to improve well-being and mitigate stress. This is especially important for Black men because the prevalence of the mental health stigma in Black communities, as well as the hesitation for men to talk about their emotional experiences, may contribute to isolation and suffering in silence.

Black men may have not been told how to adequately process and talk about their emotional experiences, and there may be societal pressure to conform to traditional gender norms of masculinity. If individuals choose to display emotional vulnerability, this may be perceived as a sign of weakness. Therefore, reaching out to someone you trust who will be non-judgmental, can help with promoting resiliency.

Additionally, meaningful connection can also involve one finding comfort in the presence of a companion animal or pet. This connection may be helpful when experiencing distress. Ultimately, no matter who or what you choose to seek connection with, it is important to be proactive in building and maintaining these relationships. Although this doesn't always come easily, strong relationships can be a powerful buffer against stress.

## 2. Mastery

Engaging in mastery involves focusing on your strengths and positive attributes. For instance, when feeling down it may be helpful to reflect on past times of resilience. Hard times can sometimes feel never-ending. Thinking back on experiences that you have overcome—for instance, passing a challenging academic course, being the first in your family to attend college, or finishing a tough competition—can enhance your motivation to endure the current moment.

Additionally, engaging in activities that you enjoy can help reduce stress and improve your mood when feeling anxious, angry, or down. Don't know where to start? Then think about an activity in which time flies by when you are fully immersed in it. Whatever that is for you, engaging in this task can help you feel more energized and confident.

## 3. Mindfulness

Additionally, practicing mindfulness can be useful. Being mindful of our emotions helps us differentiate between what is and what is not in our control. When experiencing distress, it may be easy for us to only focus on what is going wrong.

Therefore, each day, reflect on one aspect that you are thankful for in your life. It can be simply displaying gratitude that you have funds to purchase necessities during a time of economic uncertainty. Whatever it is, focusing on what is currently in your control, while also practicing gratitude may help to further promote resilience.

## 4. Movement

The final M of mental wellness is engaging in movement. Movement involves both physical and mental activity to help manage our stress. Physically, incorporating short walks, stretching, or doing a few push-ups each day may be helpful. We all get to choose how we exercise our mental wellness, whether it be sharing our thoughts with someone we trust, reading self-help material, engaging in meditation or prayer, or simply taking time to sit in silence. Whatever we do, it should be regular and intentional.

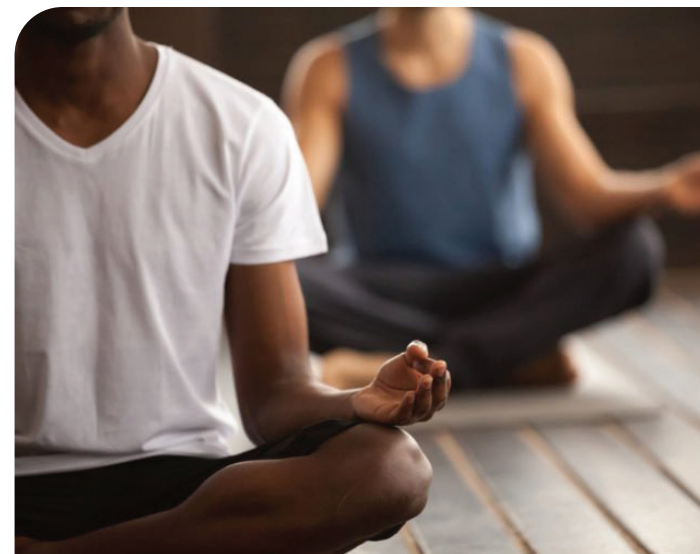
## Bottom Line

Despite the stigma that persists in Black communities, seeking help to enhance your mental wellness is not a sign of weakness, instead, it is a sign of strength, confidence, and resilience. Implementing the “The Four Ms of Mental Health,” being vulnerable when you recognize signs of stress, and reaching out for support can help Black men navigate challenges better when they arise. You are not alone and here are **some additional resources** to preserve your MENTAL wellness.

*The information provided should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease, and those seeking personal medical advice should consult with a licensed provider. Always seek the advice of a qualified health provider regarding a medical condition.*

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## IT TAKES A VILLAGE

### A Parent's Guide to TikTok

By Justin Parent, Ph.D., **Psychology Today** (Used with the author's permission)

#### *The 101 on TikTok and how to set parental controls.*

TikTok, a social media application, has been the most downloaded app on the Apple and Android app stores for months. As opposed to the lifestyle platforms of Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook, TikTok is all about short video entertainment. How short? Typically videos are 15 seconds long, and the most popular types of videos include things like lip-syncing to music or movie sound bites, quick words of wisdom, pranks, and, of course, tons of dance videos. With over 800 million active users worldwide (Datareportal, 2020), it's the No. 1 entertainment app (more downloaded than Netflix) and is becoming increasingly popular with children and teens. In fact, some estimates suggest 70% of teens use TikTok and, according to a recent Pew Research Center survey, TikTok is the top social media app for younger kids, with 30% of children between the ages of 9 and 11 using the app. All this is to say, TikTok is huge, and it's only getting bigger.

#### How does it work?

The For You Page on TikTok is similar to a Facebook or Instagram timeline, except it often shows videos from profiles that the user does not follow. The TikTok algorithm studies users' preferences (i.e., funny videos, dance videos, cooking videos, etc.) and then highlights videos from different users on the For You Page. If the user interacts by liking or commenting on a video on the For You Page, then the TikTok algorithm takes note and will continue to show similar videos. The app is designed to allow the user to scroll up for more videos continually. Outside of the For You Page, kids can follow other users, search for topics or hashtags, and message other users. Finally, users can create their own videos within the app. There are nearly endless customizations, including the video's speed, adding in music or other clips, filters, and hundreds of special effects. However, all in-app recorded videos are limited to 15 or 60 seconds.

#### What are the typical kinds of videos?

It depends. There are so many different types of videos, and new ones go viral all the time. Listed below are the most popular types of videos (original article includes links to see a popular example):

- **Dance videos:** Typically short and simple choreographed dances to popular songs.
- **Lip syncing:** These are usually to songs or short clips from popular movies or TV shows. The example video in the link has been viewed almost 500 million times.
- **Memes:** Short and quick statements that are put in text on top of a video.
- **Cooking recipes:** 60-second snapshots of steps to making things like a cake or how to turn pancakes into cereal.
- **All things style:** Wardrobe, make-up, pandemic haircuts, and various style hacks.
- **Duets:** Users pair one video with another existing video or a new one.
- **Viral challenge:** Not a specific type of video, but there is a challenge that goes viral almost every day. Everyone tries to make their own version of that dance or special effect and uses a hashtag to share it.

#### Parental Controls

Parents have become increasingly concerned about the content on TikTok and the amount of time their children spend on the app. The same concerns you might have about YouTube apply here - age-inappropriate language or content. For example, most of the dances and lip-syncing videos feature songs with explicit lyrics, and many of the dances are not what you'd like to see your 13-year-old doing. Also, because the app is designed with an endless scroll as the core feature, there is a concern about mindlessly watching for hours.

**Common Sense Media** recommends children age 15-plus use the app because of content and privacy concerns related to the app's private messaging function. However, as mentioned above, children 13 and younger are using the app more and more frequently. TikTok automatically restricts features for accounts for children 13-15 (e.g.,



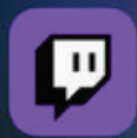
Facebook



Instagram



WhatsApp



Twitch



TikTok



Discord



Snapchat



YouTube



Twitter

can't post videos), but after 15, all features are unlocked. The app has an under 13 option, but this is easy to go around, so most kids will be on the regular 13+ version of the app (all they have to do is say that they are over 13 or, more likely, over 15). Luckily, TikTok developed some great features for anyone to limit content and especially for parents concerned about their child's TikTok use. Below are core ways to limit content, time, and communication with other users.

- **Limit screen time.** TikTok allows parents to set a 40-, 60-, 90-, or 120-minute limit. The key is that to go beyond this limit, users have to enter a specific passcode (that you as parents should keep and not tell them). Why can't you limit it to less than 40 minutes? Money. Check out our **other story** on how to set time limits on any app (including for less than 40 minutes).
- **Limit content.** TikTok has a Restricted Mode that limits videos that may have mature content (like swearing). TikTok doesn't give a lot of details on this, but the idea is that when it detects mature content, the video is flagged so that it won't show up under Restricted Mode, which means that this mode isn't always going to be perfect at filtering out content.
- **Private account.** By default, your account starts as public. This means that anyone can view your child's videos, post comments, reactions, or make duets to their videos. If you switch to a private account, only approved people become followers and can see your child's content. Parents can also limit if their teen's account can be suggested to others to follow and who can send your teen direct messages (friends only).

You've got two good options for how to proceed. The first is more limited but less involved and doesn't require you to create your own account (Quick and Easy). The second is called Family Pairing and has more features but requires several steps to set up, and you'll need to make your own account (and risk watching all those pet videos and seeing what Will Smith posts). Below are the steps to each option with pictures to help you along the way.

**Quick and Easy Option:** This version involves you going to your child's account settings and using a passcode (that you don't share with them) to set a screen time limit and put it into Restricted Mode.

1. Go to their Me page. When you open TikTok, it will start at the For You page (mine is shown here) that automatically loads a video it thinks you will like (they were right!). On the bottom right of the screen, you will see the Me icon that will take you to their profile page
2. Go to Settings. On the Me page, Tap the ... , located on the top right corner.
3. Click Digital Wellbeing. At the bottom of your screen, you will see the Digital Wellbeing option (with an umbrella icon).
4. Screen Time Management. On the Digital Wellbeing page, you will see two options. The first option is Screen Time Management.
5. Set a Time Limit. Click Screen Time, and then you will see an option to change the amount of time allowed and to

turn on the limit. The app will also prompt you to set a passcode during this process. Keep the passcode secret! If your child knows this number, they can undo the limits you set.

6. Enable Restricted Mode. Now that you have a screen time limit set, you can finish things off by enabling Restricted Mode. This will require you to enter the same passcode you set while turning on the screen time limit.

## Family Pairing Advanced Option

The more advanced version has one main benefit over the simple one above—enhanced privacy settings that your child can't change. Any of the privacy settings shown in the picture can be set by the simple method above, but there is no way to set a passcode to prevent them from being removed. Using Family Pairing, you can make their account private (no one can follow them unless they are friends), limit follow suggestions, only allow friends to direct message them, and who can view or comment on their videos.

1. Make Your Own Account. You will need your own account for this method, so download the app and go through the steps to make a profile.
2. Link Accounts. Once you have your own account, go to your settings, and scroll down to the Family Pairing. This step will require your child to go to the Family Pairing setting and scan a QR code that shows up after the page after the one below.
3. Set Desired Controls. Once your child's account is linked to yours, you can set the same screen time and Restricted Mode settings seen above, along with new options for privacy settings. Your child can unlink from your account, but you will be notified, and it will take 48 hours from when they click unlink before the parental control settings expire. Essentially, TikTok tells on them and gives you plenty of time to undo things.

*This post was co-authored by Geraldine Cadet, B.A., the clinical research coordinator for the Child and Family Well-Being Lab (CFW) at Florida International University. She is interested in assisting youth in under-served communities, providing culturally relevant services, and educational development. She is also interested in examining how low SES and violence affect child psychopathology.*

### Tips for Raising Resilient Kids

#### Tip #1 – Gratitude

Research has shown that gratitude has many benefits including improving sleep quality, reducing stress and depressive symptoms, and helping you live longer! Teach your children how to be grateful and shift their mind towards the positives in their life. A great way to do this is to ask them to reflect on a daily basis with the question "What is something you were grateful for today?"



## Just Checking in on Friends

Mental Health America

Things are tough right now. It may feel harder than ever to ask how someone is *actually* feeling or to start a conversation about their mental health. But sometimes—you just have to ask.

Introducing **Just Checking In**: ten simple questions to check-in with your friends and family. You can do this over the phone, on FaceTime, or even six feet apart—and it only takes ten minutes.

### ***A few quick things to keep in mind:***

- Spend as much time as you want on each question.
- Stay engaged with follow-up questions.
- Keep things judgment-free.
- You don't have to be an expert, you just have to listen.
- Stay in touch after, and don't be afraid to connect them to **resources**.

### **Questions**

1. How are you feeling today, really? Physically and mentally.
2. What's taking up most of your headspace right now?
3. What was your last full meal, and have you been drinking enough water?
4. How have you been sleeping?
5. What have you been doing for exercise?
6. What did you do today that made you feel good?
7. What's something you can do today that would be good for you?
8. What's something you're looking forward to in the next few days?
9. What's something we can do together this week, even if we're apart?
10. What are you grateful for right now?



### ***Keep it going***

You can use these same questions with every person in your life, multiple times.

### ***Check-in with yourself***

Don't forget that this check-in can work on your own, too! You can't help other people if you aren't checking-in with yourself, so go ahead and ask yourself these questions and answer honestly.

If you feel a little nervous about having a conversation with someone about their mental health, check out **7 Tips for Talking to a Loved One about their Mental Health**.

*Thanks for reading,  
we hope you found the information useful!*

**You can reach any of us by calling the  
EAP Office at (608) 266-6561**

**External Available 24/7:  
FEI Workforce Resilience (800) 236-7905**

Tresa Martinez, [tmartinez@cityofmadison.com](mailto:tmartinez@cityofmadison.com)

Arlyn Gonzalez, [agonzalez@cityofmadison.com](mailto:agonzalez@cityofmadison.com)  
*Provides bilingual EAP services in English and Spanish*

Lori Wessel, [lwessel@cityofmadison.com](mailto:lwessel@cityofmadison.com)

Sherri Amos, [samos@cityofmadison.com](mailto:samos@cityofmadison.com)

To learn more about your external EAP services, please contact FEI at 1-800-236-7905 or log on to [feieap.com](http://feieap.com) and type username: madison.