**THE VILLAGE PROJECT, INC.’S**

**STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

**BY**

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As Blacks and people of color, in general, we are survivors of numerous pandemics, to include enslavement, colonialism, racism and other forms of ongoing oppression. Each was deadly, but our indomitable Spirit, Resistance and our sense of Interdependence and Collective Responsibility gave us the strength necessary to see us through the most dangerous and foreboding of times. These are the qualities all people can call on to get us through this most difficult of times with the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Village Project, Inc., as an Essential Service Provider, remains open, but on a limited basis. We can take telephone calls for information and referrals as needed, but there are no office visits. Our therapists provide therapy by telephone only as a means of providing this essential service in a way that is safe for both therapist and client. For our public at large, we offer the following advice.

**Coping with Stress**

We know that fear and anxiety can be stressful for many of us. It can be overwhelming and cause overwhelming emotions in adults and children, older people and people with chronic health conditions, doctors and other health care providers and first responders, and those of us who have mental health conditions, to include problems with substance abuse. We believe that learning to cope with stress will serve to make us and the people we care about much stronger.

Coping can involve:

* **Spirituality**. Whether religious in practice or as a form of meditative thoughtfulness and rituals, whichever form used to make one feel secure in insecure times should be called on during this pandemic and practiced daily.
* **Taking Breaks.** Stop watching and listening to the news for 4-6 hours per day. Give yourself time to read comics or call a friend and carry on small talk. Unwind by engaging in activities you enjoy.
* **Body Care –** Take deep breaths for 5 minutes at least three times per day, eat healthy , exercise regularly and sleep by a schedule. Routine helps alleviate feelings of insecurity.
* **Maintain contact with others outside –** This is most important as feelings isolation can lead to depression and anxiety. If you live with family members, engage them in family discussions in in family circles in the evenings after dinner and before bed.
* **For Pre-Existing Mental Health or Ongoing Substance Use Problems –** For those with pre-existing mental health issues, they should continue treatment in whatever modality that is available. Many places, like The Village Project, Inc., carry on teletherapy for its clients. For those with ongoing substance use problems, also continue your treatment through whatever modality is available as well as maintaining regular contact with your Sponsor by telephone.

**THE VILLAGE PROJECT “WARM LINE”**

The telephone number for The Village Project, Inc. – (831) 392-1500 – is now “The Warm Line” for people coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. For persons seeking information about resources or needing to talk to an empathetic, reassuring staff person or clinical professional can call this number from 8:00am to 5:00pm Mondays through Fridays, except for holidays. The Village Project, Inc. is in regular contact with the Monterey County Health Department [www.co.monterey.ca/health](http://www.co.monterey.ca/health), the California Department of Public Health [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov) and the National Center for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). These are the major sources of information for the public regarding this pandemic. There is a Bantu concept called Ubuntu, which speaks to the connectedness of humanity. In the spirit of Ubuntu, we will all get through this together!