

Charlotte County update for 4/8/20

Take care of yourself and help others during crisis

By Hector Flores, Charlotte County Administrator

The coronavirus news is coming at us in waves and it can feel overwhelming at times. If you're experiencing stress, fear or anxiety, that is a normal reaction. There are ways to cope – with the help of a therapist or through self-care strategies. Here are some coping tips I've shared with my staff:

- Talk or write about your reactions.
- Exercise.
- Spend time with supportive people.
- Avoid mood-altering substances, such as alcohol or drugs.
- Practice deep breathing, meditation, progressive relaxation.
- Lower expectations of what you “should be doing.”
- Rest, eat healthy, take a hot bath, listen to relaxing music.
- Keep a normal schedule.
- Focus on things you can control.

If you need to talk to someone, there are local organizations that provide mental health services, including virtual therapy by phone or tablet chats or in person. For information, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click the COVID-19 Information banner, then click the Resources and Opportunities button – there you'll find help hotlines and a link to Mental Health Services.

I want to assure you Charlotte County and its Department of Health and public safety partners are doing everything we can to protect the community under these extraordinary circumstances. I have extended facility closures, with the exception of park trails and boat ramps, until further notice. We're implementing teleworking as much as we can.

Under Gov. DeSantis' Safer at Home order, the county will continue to offer the current level of services to the community. Online services available are listed on the COVID-19 Information webpage. Click the What Can I Do Online? Button.

The disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak has impacted thousands of residents, especially those in the service and tourism industries. Our tourism bureau has launched an initiative to help called Our Best Side Is By Your Side, a play on its branding slogan Our Best Side is Outside.

Visit www.BestSideYourSide.com to get offers from your favorite local businesses, explore restaurant take-out and delivery options, and travel virtually. Spread the word about your support for local businesses by posting photos of you enjoying your favorite take-out or delivery meal with the hashtag #BestSideYourSide.

We're also raising money for Community Organizations Active in a Disaster, the non-profit umbrella group serving people in need during this crisis. The bureau designed a Greetings From Pure Florida T-shirt it is selling. Proceeds from every T-shirt sold will go toward COAD. If you

want to sponsor a batch of shirts, contact the bureau at 941-743-1900. For information about COAD, visit www.COADFL.org.

Hope is a powerful tool. Think positive thoughts. We will get through this and be stronger for it.

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