In a time of crisis, there are proven steps that can help us work through the uncertainties and distress we are experiencing. Here are a few from WellSpan EAP (Employee Assistance Program):

• **Acknowledge and speak up when you are stressed.**
  Research has shown that talking about your concerns helps remove them and is far better than trying to ignore, deny, or suppress the natural feelings we all share. No matter who you are, the common denominator is that we are all human, and we will feel heightened stress during this time. Acknowledging it opens the gate for us to do something about it.

• **Rely on a few trusted resources for information.**
  Think: CDC, the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Limit searches on Google.

• **But limit your exposure to information.**
  Over-consumption of social media, national media and local media coverage of COVID-19 can consume you and create depleted energy and even more distress.

• **Stay connected with others.**
  You may have to work harder at this as you adhere to the Pennsylvania Department of Health restrictions social distancing, but this one is huge. Virtual interactions count!

• **Take care of your own basic needs.**
  You need fuel for the mind and body. Eat nutritious food, hydrate and try to get enough sleep.

• **Keep up your daily routine as much as you can.**
  Routine is key – whether your usual one or a new one you create! Routine helps you maintain a sense of normalcy that can dramatically reduce stress. It might require some creative thinking, but this is vital for you in your work and for your family at home.

• **Take breaks, breathe, slow down with intention and set limits.**
  We must remember to step away from our work. Take a time out even if it’s for a minute or two. To slow down, and be present, will help slow what may seem like a chaotic, stressful experience.

• **Move!**
  Stand up and be active and exercise in whatever way you can, even in small increments. Get outside and take a walk, get some fresh air, look at the clouds, breathe deeply.

• **Focus on what you can control.**
  Be present and in the moment. Avoid the “what ifs.” Psychologists call this catastrophizing or running worst-case scenarios in our heads. This behavior will only create more distress.

• **Laugh!**
  Watch a funny movie, YouTube video or anything that tickles your funny bone. Laughter is good food for the soul. Laughter is an essential part of the coping equation during an emotionally charged time.