



**Press Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FERD & GLADYS ALPERT JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE  
PROVIDES FREE VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**WEST PALM BEACH, FL – April 17, 2020** – Four virtual support groups are now on the Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service (Alpert JFS) community calendar for residents of the Greater Palm Beaches to come together to share coping strategies, stay safe, and feel more empowered and connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. While Alpert JFS has always acknowledged and addressed serious situations surrounding mental health issues, the current health crisis has only exacerbated the need for services, and the agency continues to serve the community via virtual technology. All the programs that offer ongoing group support are free of charge, but registration is required.

**“Coping With Our New Reality: Social Distancing Without Isolation,”** a new Zoom discussion group facilitated by Licensed Psychologist Iris Kiner, Psy.D. and Alpert JFS Clinical Director Elaine Rotenberg, Ph.D., is meeting every Monday from 6:00-7:00 p.m. Those dropping in will learn how to identify coping skills, available resources, and how to connect when feeling disconnected. Visit [www.AlpertJFS.org/events/coping/](http://www.AlpertJFS.org/events/coping/) to register.

“People are not meant to be alone,” said Dr. Kiner. “Our new forum offers a way for community members to get help with the exceptional changes and realities currently impacting their lives.

“We’re offering both an educational opportunity, and a place to turn for people struggling with how to manage the changes brought about by the current COVID-19 health crisis,” said Dr. Rotenberg. “

A **Domestic Abuse Support Group** during COVID-19 will meet online every Thursday, from 9:00-10:00 a.m., starting on April 23, 2020. Led by Alpert JFS Domestic Abuse Program Director Sara Walsh, LCSW, the group will connect those in similar situations, providing general support, coping skills while sheltering in place, and tips for emotional safety planning.

“Shelter at home doesn’t mean it is safe for everyone,” said Walsh. “Statistics show domestic abuse increases during times of crisis. We want to be a support to those who are suffering.”

**To register, visit [www.AlpertJFS.org/events/help](http://www.AlpertJFS.org/events/help) or phone the Alpert JFS Chai Line at 561-684-1991.**

Ronni Cutler, LCSW, has led the **Family Survivors of Suicide** support group in the Lake Worth office for the past 25 years; her meetings, now online, are the first and third Wednesdays of the month. A second Family Survivors of Suicide support group for people in the West Palm Beach area, facilitated by Walsh, will meet virtually on the second and fourth

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## Virtual Support Groups

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Tuesdays each month, from 5:00-6:30 p.m., beginning on Tuesday, April 28, 2020. Both groups offer participants the opportunity to process feelings, access relevant resources, and learn about depression and other types of mental illness in a trusting group.

“Being a family member who lost someone to suicide is devastating,” said Walsh. “It brings with it not only grief and loss, but tremendous guilt. The group offers a safe place to process these feelings and gain the support of others. “

**Visit [www.AlpertJFS.org/events](http://www.AlpertJFS.org/events) or call 561-684-1991 to register for the online group that is most convenient for you. Sessions will continue face-to-face once the stay-in-place orders lift.**

Family members dealing with a loved one suffering from substance use addiction can find support from the Alpert JFS **Jewish Family Addiction Support Group**, which meets on Fridays from 12:00-1:30 p.m. Rebecca Marcus Wheeler, LCSW, facilitates the group, providing a safe space for participants to share feelings and experiences.

“Our group is making a point to stay connected through the transition from in-person meetings to telehealth sessions,” said Wheeler. “A strong support system is so important to recovery from addiction, and even more so with the recent changes in our world.”

**Register by contacting Carolyn Yasuna at 561-762-9707 or email [Carolyn.Yasuna@AlpertJFS.org](mailto:Carolyn.Yasuna@AlpertJFS.org).**

Alpert JFS remains “open for business” to the community, with information and/or assistance available for counseling, psychiatric support, caregiver support, senior services and other human services in our community. Call the Chai Line at 561-684-1991 visit [www.AlpertJFS.org/contact/](http://www.AlpertJFS.org/contact/) to connect with a Master’s-level professional.

A COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund has been established to support those in need of assistance with food pantry, counseling, psychiatry, child psychiatry, and senior care services. Make your tax-deductible contribution at [www.AlpertJFS.org/covid19fund/](http://www.AlpertJFS.org/covid19fund/).

Established in 1974, Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service is a nationally accredited service provider for children, adults, seniors, and Holocaust survivors. The non-profit, non-sectarian organization is a trusted leader, with a team of more than 175 highly skilled professionals delivering high-quality care to community members. Alpert JFS works to ensure the well-being of children and families, independence of older adults and quality-of-life for individuals with disabilities. For more information, visit [www.AlpertJFS.org](http://www.AlpertJFS.org) or phone 561-684-1991.

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