



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GRANT FROM TD CHARITABLE FOUNDATION ENABLES FERD & GLADYS ALPERT JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE TO EXPAND “COPING WITH OUR NEW REALITY” VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS WITH NEW PILOT PROGRAM REACHING SIX LOCAL GATED COMMUNITIES

WEST PALM BEACH, FL – August 26, 2020 – Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service (Alpert JFS) has provided opportunities to teach and talk about the COVID-19 crisis and the challenges people are facing through its free “Coping With Our New Reality: Social Distancing Without Isolation” virtual discussion support groups. The open-to-the-public group for participants of all backgrounds, faiths and abilities, has grown to include “Coping With Our New Reality: Parents Edition” to help those with children navigate living, working and teaching from home, and also exclusive presentations to local businesses and non-profit organizations. Now, thanks to a grant from TD Charitable Foundation through the support of the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County, the program will expand to six gated communities between Boynton Beach and North Palm Beach County as part of a new pilot program to targeted populations, featuring a series of sessions to help participants identify ways to enhance their own resiliency.

"TD recognizes that during the time of COVID-19 it is more important than ever to stay connected and not be socially isolated, so we are proud to help support the expansion of this much-needed programming," said Pablo Pino, South Florida Market President of Commercial, TD Bank.

The gated communities will include three 55+ communities and three communities with a significant number of families with children, populations that are at a higher risk for the challenges COVID-19 presents: social isolation and/or anxiety and depression. An initial discussion to identify specific needs of each gated community and three personalized group follow-up sessions will be offered to each community.

"The residential community initiative for “Coping with Our New Reality” will allow isolated groups to build community through interactive discussions," said Alpert JFS CEO Marc D. Hopin. "The connections forged among participants during these exclusive presentations will help create a sense of belonging and support system for residents."

Facilitated by Alpert JFS Clinical Director Elaine Rotenberg, Ph.D. and Licensed Psychologist Iris Kiner, Psy. D., the groups were designed to respond to the initial mental health issues that have arisen, and to mitigate the onset of more severe mental illness among a population that had little time to prepare for or understand Coronavirus and its implications. They identify coping skills and offer a space to connect with others having similar experiences.

"The uncertainty brought about by the pandemic has led to worries, fears, and a range of other emotions that can feel very overwhelming," said Dr. Rotenberg. "This workshop provides a way for people to frame this new reality and, by doing so, feel more in control. We hope that by gaining understanding and strategies for coping now, we will avoid the onset of more severe mental health problems down the road."

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“During this unprecedented and difficult time, it is important to identify coping tools and skills,” said Dr. Kiner. “The more coping tools we recognize and have available to us, the less likely we are to have long-lasting effects once the stressor lifts.

“As many struggle with anxiety, depression, and isolation as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, we are honored to support our partner agency, Alpert Jewish Family Service, and its new initiative during this challenging time,” said Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County President & CEO Michael Hoffman. “We are incredibly grateful that TD Charitable Foundation recognizes the critical need of supporting programs that help individuals who are in social isolation to make a connection and stay connected to their local communities, and manage the changes impacting their lives and the lives of their families due to COVID-19.”

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 nearly 200 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 or phone 561-684-1991.

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