



FALL 2020

IT'S ACHIEVABLE

The Achievable Foundation Newsletter



The New Normal

As we head into to the fall season during these unprecedented times, it is important that we focus on our mental health. While circumstances have changed, and the transition from summer to the fall season and going back to school looks different than it ever has before, we have an opportunity to establish a "new normal."

See page 7 for eight steps you can begin today.

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Carmen's Corner

Carmen Ibarra, CEO

This year has been a lesson in resiliency at Achievable. We knew we couldn't stand still even as COVID-19 brought life, as we knew it, to a halt. Unfortunately, it's all too common for the populations Achievable serves to experience the brunt of a disease.

COVID-19, like so many diseases before it, disproportionately affects the most vulnerable among us: people with developmental disabilities, communities of color and low-income households. But COVID-19 came at us on a whole new level. Seeing firsthand the disparities highlighted by the pandemic, our job at Achievable became more important than ever.

As the world around us shuttered, people reached out to us who had lost their jobs and at times their homes. Access to quality

"We will weather the storm, together."

education was exacerbated by the digital divide, and some for the first time faced food insecurities. Others have faced challenges with access to important support structures and social interactions. In the middle of all of this, we all were faced...

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...with the ugliness of racism. In short, this has been a perfect storm.

Though restrictions have begun to relax, our vigilance has not. This public health and racial crisis underscores that Achievable is more critical than ever.

I come to you this month to reassure you that Achievable is weathering this storm. As we move forward, we will continue to innovate and shout from the rooftops for the equity our patients deserve. We will call attention to the needed funding and advocate for healthcare policies that ensure our patients have a fighting chance.

Whether through Telehealth or in person visits, our patients will continue to receive equitable and quality healthcare. We are working hard to expand Achievable's reach as we turn this corner. With you by our side, we will not only survive but also thrive in the midst of uncertainty.

Stay safe!



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Health Center Launches Telehealth

Even as we remain socially distant, there are new ways to connect with our healthcare team.

COVID-19 ushered in new ways of doing things, and one of those was an acceleration of Telehealth services. Achievable Health Center has been fortunate to keep its doors open to patients throughout the pandemic, but



in cases where distant care makes sense, we now offer that option.

How does it work? Telehealth is just like a normal doctor visit, but over video chat or telephone, and has been important in serving patients who have been nervous about returning to a public setting, as well as patients who respond better to treatment without the stressors of leaving home. As we continue to invigorate this service, we will soon introduce a newly created Telehealth Care Coordinator position, with the goal of getting patients and families comfortable with the technology before visits.

How do I schedule? When you make your next health center appointment, you may be evaluated to see whether Telehealth is an option for your treatment, though it's not mandatory. Patients who wish to be seen in person are always welcome.



We Welcome Behavioral Health Team Members

Achievable Health Center welcomed its first full-time clinical social worker this spring to strengthen our capacity to integrate mental health services into primary medical care. Dr. Tiffany Saucer is a Doctor of Social Work (DSW) and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) with an extensive professional career working at the intersection of mental health and developmental disabilities. Dr. Saucer graduated from the Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work at the University of Southern California last spring and completed her research addressing the grand challenge of "closing the mental health gap for individuals with intellectual disabilities and co-occurring problems with mental health."

This summer, Julianne "Juli" Papilla joined the Achievable team as the Behavioral Health Case Manager. Ms. Papilla brings her professional experience as a behavioral interventionist and an undergraduate researcher to the behavioral case manager position.



Dr. Tiffany Saucer

Ms. Papilla will work in conjunction with Dr. Saucer to provide additional hands-on support and resource referrals to some of the more vulnerable patients. The Achievable Health Center has provided specialized medical services to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. These specialized medical services have closed the gaps in medical care these individuals have historically faced. In congruence, the vision of the behavioral health team at Achievable is to seamlessly integrate mental health and therapy services into the standard of care for patients at our health center including individuals with developmental disabilities and co-occurring mental illness.



Flu Season Reminders

With COVID-19 continuing to target people with underlying health conditions, it's vital to take care of your overall health. Flu season is nearly upon us, and this is not the year to skip a vaccination. Flu can seriously strain the immune system, and staying healthy is one of the best defenses against COVID-19 and other ailments.

Fall health to-do list:

- Schedule your flu vaccination
- Act early: get vaccinated as soon as possible for optimal protection
- If you've missed a well visit or scheduled care, contact us for an appointment - you may be a candidate for Telehealth from the comfort of your home

Board Notes

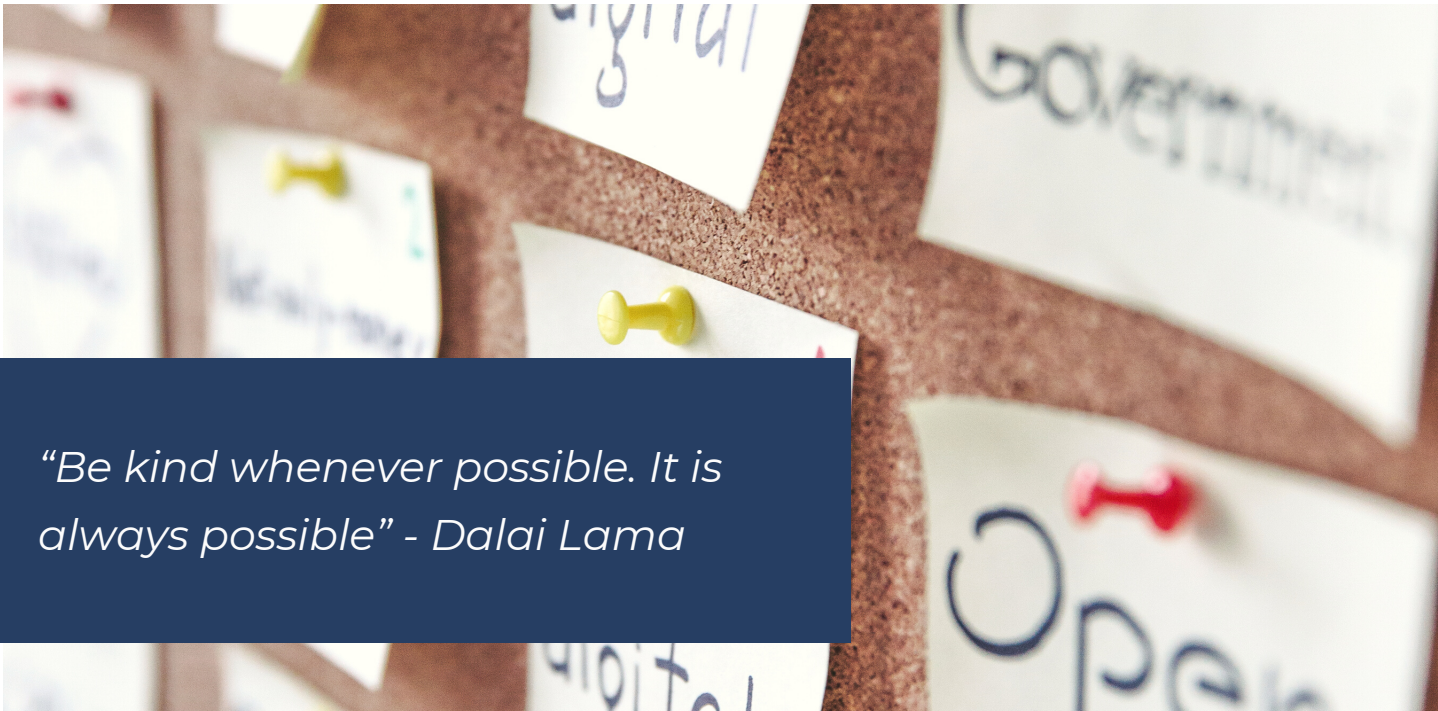
As the joke goes, when we adjusted our clocks forward to daylight savings time in the early morning hours on Sunday, March 8, 2020, who knew we were really entering the Twilight Zone. Five months into the coronavirus pandemic it is safe to say we have all been living in uncharted territory. On behalf of our entire board of directors, I am proud to say that our team of medical providers and dedicated staff, led by CEO Carmen Ibarra and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Michelle Catanzarite, has stepped up to respond to the ongoing critical care of our patients while at the same time ensuring the financial solvency of the health center during these unprecedented times.

The Achievable Health Center, like so many Federally Qualified Health Centers throughout the country, faces consistent financial and competitive pressures. As the COVID-19 virus forced limited access to our health center for in-person visits, the team quickly pivoted to providing our patients with access to their providers via Telehealth (both telephone and video) whenever possible. We are happy to report that after the initial decline in patient encounters during March through May, we are now tracking at close to full capacity and expect our year-end patient count to meet or exceed our goals. With the direct support of the public as well as foundation and government grants to supplement patient revenue, our team has turned a potentially disastrous year into one of solid

financial footing. All of this translates into our increased ability to serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and other underserved individuals with a quality of health care that many of the rest of us take for granted.

Back in September 2019 at our annual Achiever's Gala event, we honored both longtime Achievable supporter Olivia Harrison and The Material World Foundation as well as the Chicago School of Psychology. In presenting The Achiever's Award to The Chicago School, Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas intoned to the audience that "there is no health without mental health." This is never more pronounced than during these days when our entire country is in the grips of the coronavirus and all the anxiety it engenders. Recently an advocate on behalf of one of our patients who has a developmental disability reached out to Achievable requesting help for this patient who was struggling with COVID-19 related anxiety. Our on-staff licensed clinical social worker provided counseling for this individual to help manage this difficult period. While it is only one of many similar stories, it is representative of our vision: "inspiring health, improving lives."

As we look forward to the new normal of 2021, we want to thank all of you, our advocates, funders, patients, legislators and public citizens for your continued support of our mission. We couldn't do it without you. - Ted Tannenbaum



"Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible" - Dalai Lama

8 STEPS TOWARD A "NEW NORMAL"

by Tiffany Saucer, DSW, LCSW



1 ALLOW YOURSELF TO GRIEVE MISSED PLANS

It is ok to be upset and grieve cancelled plans; try focusing on what great occasions the future will bring.

5 SET BOUNDARIES

Consider a balance between caring for loved ones while prioritizing your own self-care. Be honest about needing more "me time" right now.

2 START A MORNING ROUTINE

Get up at a set time every morning. Eat a balanced breakfast. Get dressed (even if you are working from home).

6 MOVE YOUR BODY

Exercise for at least 30 minutes every day. Select fun indoor and outdoor activities (don't forget your mask!). Try something new!

3 EAT WELL

Drink half your body weight in ounces of water each day. Water is a great source of energy. Eat lots of leafy greens and fruits. Don't forget a multi-vitamin!

7 BE "VIRTUALLY SOCIAL"

Establish weekly telephone or video chat check-ins with family and friends. Consider establishing a theme such as "Wine Down Wednesdays" or "Thankful Thursdays".

4 LIMIT NEGATIVE NEWS

Consider limiting your media intake to a specific amount of time or a specific time of day. Try reading your news instead of watching it on television.

8 FIND WAYS TO PROCESS

Start a journal or diary to process your feelings each day. Pray or meditate. Access therapy or counseling. Be honest with someone you trust.



"We must accept finite disappointment,
but never lose infinite hope."
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



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