

SMSD Information and Resources

Service Members and Military Families

It’s been almost a week since many Wisconsin National Guard Service members and their families have experienced many changes in their day to day lives. Our youth and college students are completing school work online, many military families are teleworking, National Guardsmen have been called up on State Active Duty, Service members are deployed, and some of us are temporarily unemployed. During this time, the Service Member Support Division is here to assist. If you need information or resources, please do not hesitate to contact us at 1-800-292-9464 option 1. You may also find many of resources on our website at [www.wisconsinmilitary.org](http://www.wisconsinmilitary.org).

If you are experiencing financial hardships at this time, the resources listed provide assistance to Service members and their families. Please visit the websites for specific details for each resources listed.

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| MFFA Grant | wisconsinmilitary.org |
| Heat for Heroes | https://heat4heroes.org |
| The American Legion – National Website – Temporary Financial Aid grant | www.legion.org |
| WI American Legion | https://wilegion.org/ |
| VFW Unmet Needs grantVFW - Department of WI | https://vfwwi.org |
| VFW - National website | https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants |
| WI Dept. of Veteran Affairs - | https://dva.wi.gov/Pages/benefitsClaims/VORP.aspx |
| SSVF (Supportive Services for Veterans Families) - | https://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/?page=/home/general\_program\_info\_regs |
| CVI (Center for Veterans Issues) | https://www.cvivet.org/ |
| American Red Cross | https://www.redcross.org/get-help/military-families/financial-assistance.html |
| Salute Heroes | https://saluteheroes.org/get-help/emergency-financial-aid/ |
| Salute Inc. | https://www.saluteinc.org/get-assistance/ |
| Operation Homefront | https://www.operationhomefront.org/howwehelp |

Spring Weather is almost upon us. Take a few moments out of your day and practice your disaster preparedness and severe weather with children. Make a plan, get the family involved, and practice drills. For more information, visit <https://www.ready.gov/wisconsin> or <https://www.facebook/ReadyWiscsonin>.

Cooking is a great way to spend quality time with your children. The whole family can working on researching, planning, and preparing meals that are healthy and kid-friendly. Looking for ideas:

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/packages/recipes-for-kids/cooking-with-kids> . Kid friendly meatball recipe included at the end of the newsletter.



Mental and spiritual health is especially important during stressful times. Do not forget to get a good night’s sleep and practice wellness throughout the day. Exercise, yoga, and mindfulness are all good things to incorporate into your routine. Included in the end of this newsletter is information gathered from the Milwaukee Meditation and Wellness Center.

**Unemployment:** Have you recently become unemployed? Do you know how to file for unemployment? The information listed below may be useful in filing apply at : my.unemployment.wisconsin.gov

If you're out of work through no fault of your own you'll need to apply for unemployment benefits before you can begin filing a weekly claim. Please make sure you have these documents ready to go to make your application quick and easy:

* A username and password for filing online
* A valid email or mobile number
* Your [social security number](https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/handbook/english/contentsnumber.htm)
* Your Wisconsin driver license or identification number
* Your work history for the last 18 months:
	+ Employers' business names
	+ Employers' addresses (including zip code)
	+ Employers' phone number
	+ First and last dates of work with each employer
	+ Reason no longer working with each employer
* If **not** a U.S. citizen, your alien registration number, document number and expiration date
* Form DD-214 (Member 4 copy), if you served in the military in the last 18 months
* Form SF-50 or SF-8, if you are a federal civilian employee
* If you are a union member, the name and local number of your union hall
* Your current address. You need a valid mailing address to receive important documents about your claim. Make sure you have notified your post office of any recent changes to your address.

**Online services are available at the following times**:

Sunday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Monday – Friday 6:00 am - 7:00 pm

Saturday 9:00 am - 2:30 pm

**Building Healthy Relationships:**

FREE Building Resilience: Navigating the Anxiety and Stress of COVID-19 webinars

Webinar is 1100 CST both days and topics include:

* Avoid becoming overwhelmed
* Be resilient despite the distances between us
* Fist our best selves in times like these

To register, use the following links:

Tuesday, March 24: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6547773568494766347>

Thursday, March 26: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4322780947806662155>

**Marriage & Family**

If you’re married or in a committed relationship—and recall telling your partner you’re committed “for better or worse” did you ever really imagine the “for worse”? Most of us don’t when we’re caught up in the moment, but for some of you—this pandemic experience has raised many questions and concerns while putting a strain on relationships with loved ones. Here are some resources for individuals, couples and families:

**Five Love Languages, by Gary Chapman:**



**John Gottman**

The Gottman Institute blog: <https://www.gottman.com/blog/>

This website has some great resources for all individuals and is free!

Marriage Minute newsletter (sent on Tuesdays and Thursdays):

<https://www.gottman.com/marriage-minute/>

He’s a renowned marriage and family therapist and has written multiple books on marriage as well as family issues:

* Raising and Emotionally Intelligent Child
* Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work
* Eight Dates
* The Relationship Cure

**Kids' Spaghetti and Meatballs (Serves 8)**

This is a simple and basic recipe for spaghetti and meatballs - very kid-friendly!

**INGREDIENTS**

**Meatballs**

* 1 small onion, finely chopped (about 1/3 cup) (75 ml)
* 1 clove garlic, minced
* coarse salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
* 1 lb(s) lean ground beef (454 gm)
* 1 egg
* 1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce (15 ml)
* ¼ cup fresh breadcrumbs (60 ml)

**Tomato Sauce**

* 3 Tbsp olive oil (45 ml)
1. ½ onion, finely chopped
2. 4 clove garlic, minced
3. coarse salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
4. 2 28-ounce cans of tomatoes, crushed (each 798 ml)
5. 1 Tbsp sugar (15 ml)
6. 2 bay leaves

**Additional Items**

* 2 lb(s) spaghetti
* ½ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (125 ml), or to taste

**DIRECTIONS**

**Meatballs**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
3. Heat a small sauté pan over medium-high heat and heat the olive oil until shimmering. Add the onion, garlic, salt and pepper and sauté for 3 minutes, or until the vegetables have softened. Remove from heat and cool completely. Combine the cooled onion mix, ground beef, egg, Worcestershire sauce, breadcrumbs, salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Mix gently until just combined. Using wet hands, form mixture into 24 balls. Transfer meatballs to a large baking sheet.
4. Bake meatballs in the oven for about 15 to 20 minutes or until meatballs are browned and cooked through. Shift the pans in the oven halfway through cooking time to ensure even browning.

**Tomato Sauce**

1. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven (or medium stockpot) over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, salt and pepper. Sauté vegetables until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the crushed tomatoes and juice, sugar, salt, pepper and bay leaves. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium low and simmer until sauce thickens, about 1 hour. Gently stir meatballs into sauce. Bring sauce and meatballs to a simmer.

**Assembly**

1. Cook spaghetti in a large pot of boiling salted water until just tender but firm to the bite. Drain and move onto serving platter. Spoon the sauce and meatballs over the pasta. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and serve.
2. Yield: 8 servings

Milwaukee Meditation & Wellness Center

1-Minute Mindfulness Exercises

By [Leonie Stewart-Weeks](https://psychcentral.com/blog/author/leonie-stewart-weeks/)

<https://psychcentral.com/blog/1-minute-mindfulness-exercises/>

1. **Yawn and stretch for 10 seconds every hour.**
Do a fake yawn if you have to. That will trigger real ones. Say “ahh” as you exhale. Notice how a yawn interrupts your thoughts and feelings. This brings you into the present.

Then stretch really, really slowly for at least 10 seconds. Notice any tightness and say “ease” or just say hello to that place (being mindful — noticing without judgment). Take another 20 seconds to notice and then get back to what you were doing.

1. **Three hugs, three big breaths exercise.**
Hug someone tight and take 3 big breaths together. Even if they don’t breathe with you, your breathing will ground them
2. **Stroke your hands.**
Lower or close your eyes. Take the index finger of your right hand and slowly move it up and down on the outside of your fingers. Once you have mindfully stroked your left hand, swap and let your left hand stroke the fingers of your right hand.
3. **Mindfully eat a raisin.**
Take a raisin or a piece of chocolate and mindfully eat it. Slow down, sense it, savor it and smile between bites. Purposefully slow down. Use all your senses to see it, touch it, smell it, and sense it.

Then gently pop it into your mouth and really savor it. Savor its texture, its taste, how it feels in your mouth. Let it linger and then swallow it. After you have swallowed it, let your lips turn up slightly and smile. Do the same thing for each raisin you eat or bite you take.

1. **Clench your fist and breathe into your fingers.**
Position your fingers and thumbs facing down. Now clench your fist tightly. Turn your hand over so your fingers and thumbs are facing up and breathe into your fist. Notice what happens.
2. **STOP.**
**S**tand up and breathe. Feel your connection to the earth.
**T**une in to your body. Lower your gaze. Scan your body and notice physical sensations or emotions. Discharge any unpleasant sensations, emotions or feelings on the out breath. Notice any pleasant ones and let them fill you up on the in breath.
**O**bserve. Lift your eyes and take in your surroundings. Observe something in your environment that is pleasant and be grateful for it and its beauty.
**P**ossibility. Ask yourself what is possible or what is new or what is a forward step.

If you find yourself being reactive, try the following steps:
Pause and take one to three big breaths.
Say “step back.” ( You don’t have to physically step back, you can just do it in your mind.)
Say “clear head.”
Say “calm body.”
Breathe again. Say “relax,” “melt” or “ease.”

1. **Mindful breathing for one minute.**
Lower your eyes and notice where you feel your breath. That might be the air going in and out at your nostrils or the rise and fall of your chest or stomach. If you can’t feel anything, place your hand on your stomach and notice how your hand gently rises and falls with your breath. If you like, you can just lengthen the in breath and the out breath or just breathe naturally. Your body knows how to breathe.

Focus on your breath. When your mind wanders, as it will do, just bring your attention back to your breath. You might like to say ‘thinking’ when you notice your thoughts and just gently shepherd your attention back to your breath.

This can be done for longer than one minute. However, even for one minute it will allow you to pause and be in the moment. Or you might just like to breathe out stress on the out breath and breathe in peace on the in breath.

1. **Loving-kindness meditation.**
For one minute, repeat ‘May I be happy, may I be well, may I be filled with kindness and peace.’ You can substitute “you” for “I” and think of someone you know and like, or just send love to all people.
2. **An aspiration.**
Decide on an aspiration. Just ask yourself this question: What is my heart’s aspiration? Pause for about 20 seconds. Do this a second or third time and write down what comes. Perhaps it is to come from love, or to be kind to yourself or others or to be patient.

Once you decide which aspiration you like best, say that at the beginning of the day. This will set you up for your day and your interactions with others (and even with yourself).

Additional Resources, Tips, and Tricks

**TAX RELIEF**IRS Coronavirus tax relief – delayed federal tax filing until July 15, 2020! For state, check for updates
<https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus>
<https://www.taxadmin.org/state-tax-agencies>

State of Wisconsin Resources relevant to Covid-19--Updates
<http://govstatus.egov.com/wi-covid-19> (scroll down to Wisconsin State resources)

Be aware of potential scam attempts
<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/protect-yourself-financially-from-impact-of-coronavirus/#anchor_potential-scams>

TSP – Investment Strategy: Stick To Your Plan
<https://www.tsp.gov/whatsnew/Content/index.html#operations>

Support for Financial Stresses
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/financial-legal/personal-finance/protecting-your-finances/support-for-financial-stresses-caused-by-covid-19>

U.S. OPM website on Coronavirus Disease
<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/covid-19/>

**TIPS**:

1. Be proactive!  Contact creditors, including mortgage lenders, right away and ask about hardship concessions. Call your mortgage lender right away if you lost income and work out a repayment plan (which may include extending your loan in exchange for agreed-upon missed payments). But call first—before missing any payments—so your credit is not damaged. Credit unions may offer assistance and loan help.

2. Check with your student loan servicer about waivers and temporary payment breaks. Do NOT stop making payments – call your servicer immediately because this is an evolving situation. GI bill benefits are being protected as students go online:
<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/03/17/senate-passes-emergency-bill-protecting-gi-bill-benefits-colleges-go-online.html?ESRC=eb_200318.nl&fbclid=IwAR3GxQrjkB7Y3q6au3_-qVk6VQlth2_UJ5joQlZKznw2yGRHcltoFirObTI>

3.  Consider using a hardship letter.  The National Consumer Law Center has a [sample letter](https://ptla.org/sites/default/files/foreclose_hardship.pdf) at <https://ptla.org/sites/default/files/foreclose_hardship.pdf> that you can adapt.

4.  Identify spending leaks.  Create a “leaner” version of your budget during tough times.

5.  Be choosy with credit cards.  Use the one with the lowest interest rate.

6.  Avoid payday loans.  According to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the average APR on a payday loan is 400%. This is predatory and keeps you in a debt trap.